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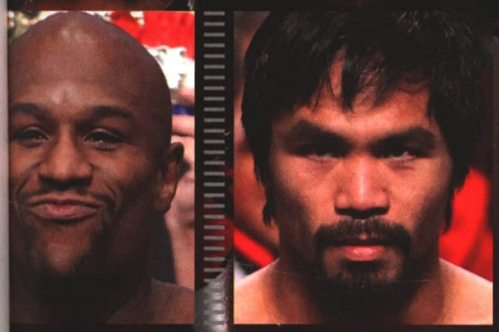
MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO



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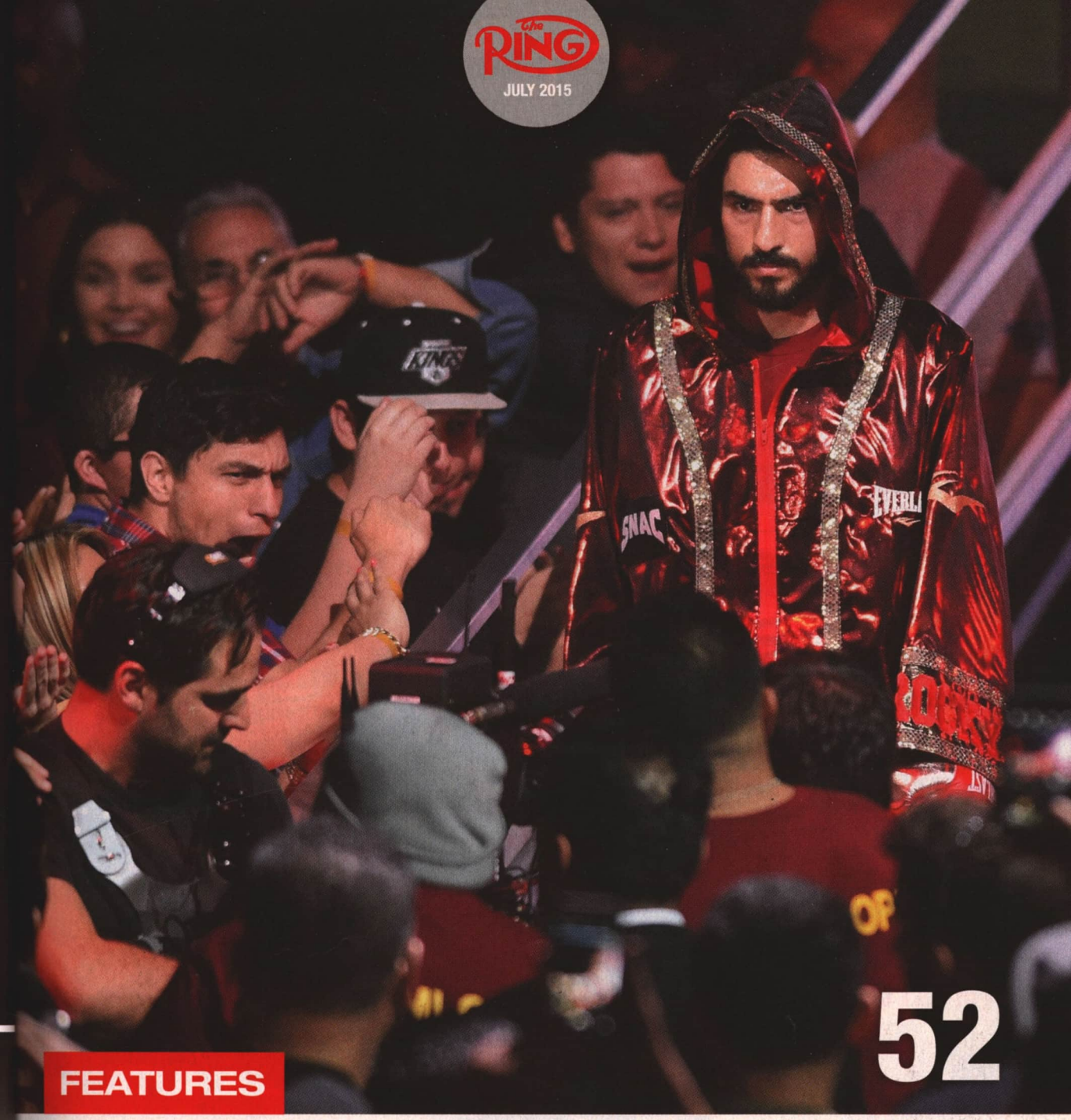

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Manny Pacquiao revealed his top opponents in Best I've Faced.

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PBC: GOOD OR BAD?

I've said and wrote many times that pay-per-view is a terrible business model for boxing. It puts a lot of money into the pockets of those involved but alienates potential fans who are reluctant to pay exorbitant fees.

And while premium networks HBO and Showtime are in many homes, their reach remains limited.

That's why I was optimistic when it became clear what Al Haymon was up to. In short, he came up with a few hundred million dollars and bought time to showcase his Premier Boxing Champions fighters on a number of free- and basic-cable networks. Those of us who grew up watching boxing on ABC were buoyed.

And good ratings for the first few PBC shows are doubly encouraging. They seem to say that general sports fans had their eyes on Keith Thurman-Robert Guerrero and the other PBC fights in March.

Encouraging.

That's the positive aspect of what Haymon is doing, from my perspective. I also have my concerns. Among them: Haymon's apparent desire to become the Dana White of boxing and his matchmaking.

It seems obvious to me that Haymon wants to control boxing by collecting all the important fighters and showcasing them on as many networks with which he can partner. White rules autocratically over the popular UFC.

That might be lucrative for Haymon and Co. but it strikes me as monopolistic, meaning it limits competition. And, in my opinion, competition on a level playing field fuels a healthy free-market system – even in boxing.

I don't know whether Haymon is trying to drive other promoters out of the business but that might be the result.

Consider: Is buying time on television networks the new norm? ESPN chucked its "Friday Night Fights" out the window when Haymon said he'd put up the money, which makes me wonder whether networks will now demand cash up front. If so, most promoters are going to be hard pressed to compete.

Then there's the matchmaking. Haymon was criticized pre-PBC for lousy matchups. Now he must put together compelling fights if his new endeavor is going to succeed.

How'd he do right out of the gate? Not bad but not great.

For example, I liked Guerrero and John Molina as opponents for Thurman and Adrien Broner on the first NBC card because I thought the Mexican-Americans would make for fun fights. Face it, though: They were safe opponents for Haymon's young stars.

I think such matchmaking could be a problem going forward, particularly because I assume Haymon wanted strong matchups for his first cards. The fans demand truly competitive pairings – such as Danny Garcia vs. Lamont Peterson, another PBC fight – on a consistent basis. Without them, viewers will turn away from boxing.

My dream is that Haymon will attract new fans to the sport with compelling matchups on free TV – God knows talented young fighters deserve a wide audience – and he will leave room for other promoters to do their thing in a competitive environment.

I worry the dream could become a nightmare if Haymon ends up unopposed and then fails to deliver.

The RING

VOLUME 94, NO. 5 | JULY 2015

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THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 94, NO. 5 (July 2015), is published nine times per year (no issues in June, October and February) by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£4.95 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. And possession $49.00 for nine issues; Canada and Mexico add $7 for nine issues per year and all remaining countries add $15.00 for nine issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2015 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A

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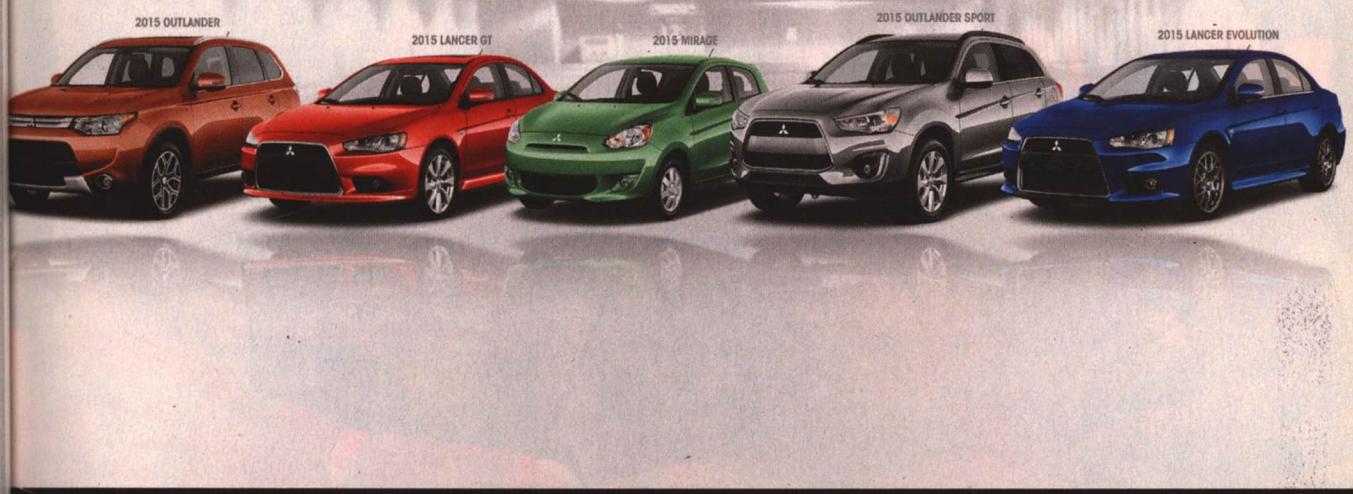

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Andre Berto put on a good show on the Premier Boxing Champions card in March on Spike, stopping Josesito Lopez in six rounds.

COME OUT WRITING

THE NEED FOR PBC

Al Haymon's decision to put championship boxing back on network TV is a necessary response to a changing sports environment and a brilliant game-changer. Making top-level fights all cable or pay-per-view has created exclusivity at the expense of a broader audience. And because of MMA, boxing must create a bigger audience from the ground up. That's what MMA does and why it has grown so rapidly. Early indications look good. The card outdid recent MMA bouts on Fox, hauling in 3.4 million viewers. The card itself featured two fighters going in different directions. First we had a post-Maidana, gun-shy Adrien Broner decisioning John Molina as opposed to a murderous Keith Thurman brutalizing an outmatched Robert Guerrero. All those, however, who continue to propagate the fantasy that "boxing is dying," think about this: Floyd Mayweather Jr. makes more in two fights annually than every UFC champ in every division combined does.

Brad Morris
Astoria, New York

RISE OF KOVALEV

I saw a great stylistic matchup in Sergey Kovalev-Jean Pascal. Kovalev came out smarter for the first four rounds, nearly sending Pascal through the ropes in the third. Then Kovalev tried to kill Pascal in the fifth and sixth and Pascal fought back. Tremendous effort. The seventh and eighth speak for themselves. Kovalev is a beast. I see that Kovalev cracked the pound-for-pound list at No. 10 for his efforts but he isn't THE RING light heavyweight champion. Any chance that will change? It seems weird that Kovalev is in the pound-for-pound rankings and champion Adonis Stevenson isn't. Seems contradictory.

Jim Lin
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Sergey Kovalev

Editors note: THE RING pound-for-pound ratings – in which fighters are ranked regardless of weight – are based entirely on opinion. The magazine's championships are generally decided in the ring. Stevenson won THE RING 175-pound title by stopping then-champion Chad Dawson in one round in 2013. Someone must take it from him, although he could also vacate the title or have it revoked in certain circumstances. Andre Ward recently lost his RING 168-pound title because of inactivity.

RESPECT FOR DONAIRE

I'm not sure whether Nonito Donaire's heart was in it 100 percent when he fought Nicholas Walters in October. But the guy seems to have the pride and courage to compete with anyone. And his accomplishments are undeniable at the highest level. On top of the accomplishments inside the ring, the guy doesn't talk trash about his opponents before or after the fights. He seems to be genuinely a good guy. I know boxing is a business with lot of entertainment value but none of that really matters. Nonito should be respected by the hardcore heads at the end of the day. It's great that he got to fight in front of his native Filipino fans in March after a long time. Maybe he'll go and challenge another top dog in the super bantamweight division. I wouldn't count him out against anybody other than Guillermo Rigondeaux. Carl Frampton is looking like the real deal but, in my opinion, stylistically that would be a better matchup for Donaire than the Cuban master.

Jaakko Halmes
Tampere, Finland

AVOIDING GGG

In the January (2015) issue of THE RING, James Ranck wrote that he wants Gennady Golovkin to go up to 168 pounds to fight Andre Ward. Why are Ward fans always wanting 175-pounders to come down to him and 160-pounders to go up to him? If Ward is so great, let him come down to 160 to face Triple-G. I would take Golovkin hands down in that fight. Or let Ward move up to 175, where Sergey Kovalev would simply destroy him. You can bet Ward will never do either. Finally, I would love to see Floyd Mayweather Jr. move up just four or five pounds from 154 and challenge Triple-G. Mayweather will move up for Miguel Cotto so why not Golovkin? Triple-G is a fighter Mayweather wants absolutely nothing to do with.

Lou L. Eagler
Riverside, Calif.

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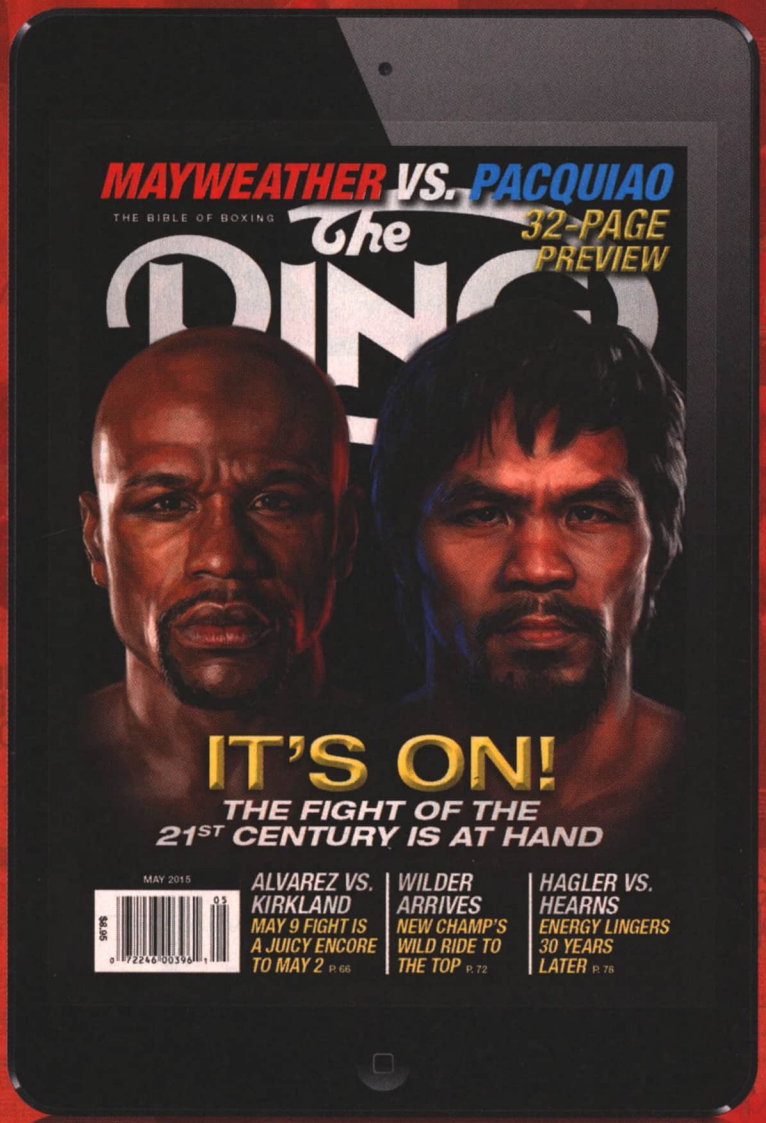

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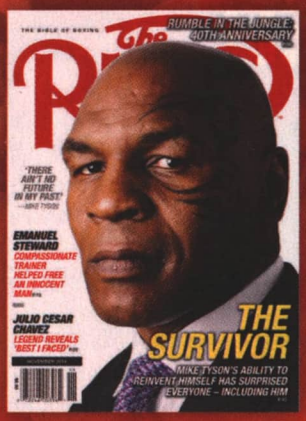

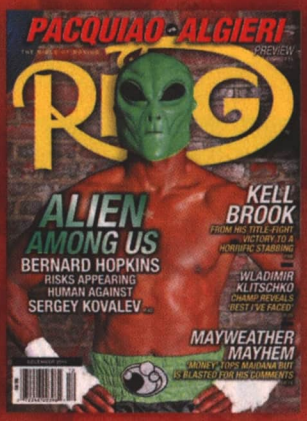

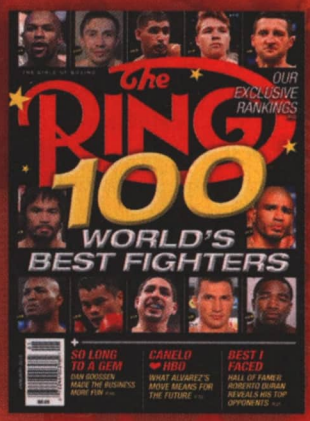

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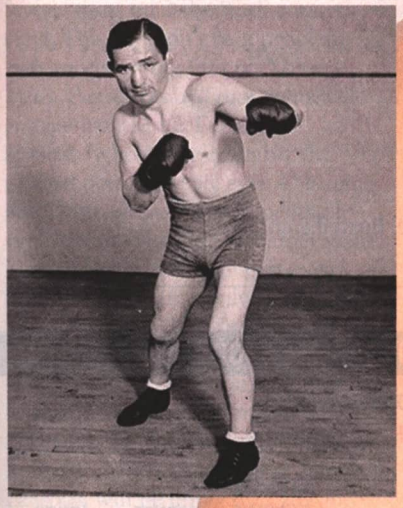
ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, we link one of the first Russian-born fighters to make it big in boxing – onetime featherweight champ Louis "Kid" Kaplan – with current Russian sensation Sergey Kovalev. Kaplan last fought in 1933.

LOUIS "KID" KAPLAN

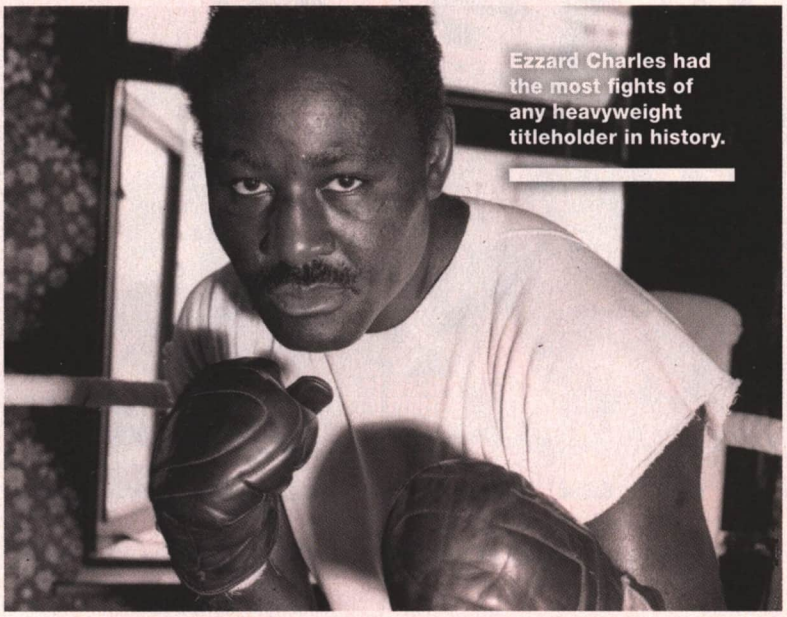


FOUGHT **COCOA KID**, WHO FOUGHT
RAY BARNES, WHO FOUGHT
SUGAR RAY ROBINSON, WHO FOUGHT
DENNY MOYER, WHO FOUGHT
VITO ANTUOFERMO, WHO FOUGHT
MARVIN HAGLER, WHO FOUGHT
ROBERTO DURAN, WHO FOUGHT
PIPINO CUEVAS, WHO FOUGHT
LUPE AQUINO, WHO FOUGHT
BERNARD HOPKINS, WHO FOUGHT

SERGEY KOVALEV »

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Everyone knows that boxers these days don't fight as often as they once did. But that hasn't prevented Wladimir Klitschko from becoming a prolific heavyweight. The Ukrainian had 66 fights going into his bout against Bryant Jennings on April 25, which equals the 18th most fights among all heavyweight world titleholders since John L. Sullivan. But Klitschko was only nine fights behind Jack Dempsey and Larry Holmes, who are tied at No. 10. Here's the list:



Ezzard Charles had the most fights of any heavyweight titleholder in history.

119 EZZARD CHARLES
103 PRIMO CARNERA
101 BOB FITZSIMMONS
95 JACK JOHNSON
86 JAMES J. BRADDOCK
85 GENE TUNNEY
81 GEORGE FOREMAN
80 MAX BAER
76 GREG PAGE
75 JACK DEMPSEY
75 LARRY HOLMES

Source: Boxrec.com

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 ANDRZEJ FONFARA LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ **2 OMAR FIGUEROA** LIGHTWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ **3 LEE SELBY** FEATHERWEIGHT CONTENDER

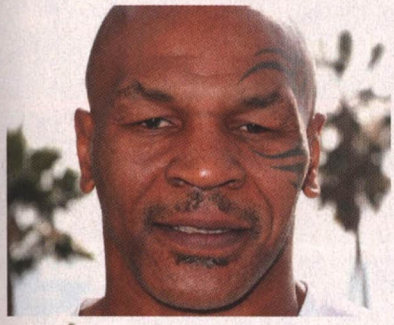
FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD:	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	"I like hip-hop and Polish rap. I have a Polish rap band that made a song for me; it is my ring entrance music."	"I like a Porsche."	"Italian food."	"I have five tattoos. One of my tattoos is of my IBO belt, with a couple of things from Chicago. On my right bicep I have a Legia Warsaw logo, for my favorite soccer team. On my ribs I have boxing gloves and a Polish eagle. On my ankle I have the date I met my girlfriend."	"Artur Boruc (soccer player). He is my friend."	"I have a couple, James Bond and 'John Carter.'"	"'FIFA.'"
2.	"I listen to anything with a good beat. I don't really care about the words. If it has a good beat, I'll give it a listen.	"I have a Ford F-150, a truck."	"Oh man, I honestly don't discriminate when it comes to food as you can tell by my weight history. Anything my mom cooks I love."	"No, not yet, maybe in the future."	"I'd have to say Tim Duncan."	"'Gladiator,' hands down."	"Between 'FIFA 14' and 'Call of Duty.'"
3.	"Hip-hop. I like Big L, Tupac and Biggie."	"Dream car, either a Rolls Royce or a Bentley."	"Cheesecake."	"Me and my brother (Andrew, a 2012 Olympian in boxing), have the same tattoo on our forearm of praying hands with rosary beads and a cross and our brother's name."	"Michael Jordan."	"I'd go with 'Kes.'"	"I don't play on the computer."

— Anson Wainwright

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

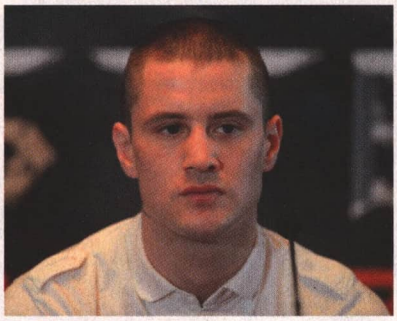


GOOD

Too many biopics result in disappointment because a good story is butchered by bad filmmakers, casting, acting or anything else that can destroy a promising project. Several films on Babe Ruth come to mind. This shouldn't be a problem with an upcoming film on Mike Tyson. Actor: Jamie Foxx, who will portray Iron Mike. Director: Martin Scorsese, who made arguably the greatest boxing movie ever – "Raging Bull." Tyson's story is compelling to say the least. The Hall of Famer went from street thug to youngest-ever heavyweight champ only to become a villain, go to prison for rape, regain the title and finally turn his life around in recent years. I'm optimistic that Foxx and Scorsese will make a film as riveting as "Raging Bull," although Robert DeNiro's portrayal of Jake LaMotta will be impossible to top. If "Raging Bull" had a flaw, in my opinion, it was the not-so-realistic boxing scenes. I suspect Scorsese will rectify that in this film. I know I'm not alone when I say I love a good boxing movie, particularly a biopic about a real fighter. I couldn't be more excited about this one. And there should be more to come. Why hasn't anyone made a good film about Joe Louis?

BAD

I was going through the RING Ratings for this issue when I discovered something interesting: 55 fighters of 180 total – almost one third (30.5 percent) – are undefeated. That struck me as bad. It says to me, more than anything else, that the best fighters in the sport aren't facing one another. The most troubling example is the potentially competitive junior featherweight division. Of the 11 122-pounders rated by THE RING – including champion Guillermo Rigondeaux – nine are undefeated. That demonstrates in glaring terms that the best junior featherweights are avoiding one another. It follows then that the fans aren't getting fights that are as competitive as they should be, at least not on paper. That's bad for boxing. The fighters must demand fights against their most accomplished counterparts and their promoters must accommodate them for the good of the sport. I also discovered something else: 20 years ago, in the November 1995 issue of THE RING, 24 percent (39 of 160) were undefeated. That's better than 30.5 percent but also seemed high. Obviously this is an ongoing problem.



WORSE

Imagine fighting professionally for almost 14 years and you have next to nothing. That's the position Ricky Burns was in before his fight against Omar Figueroa on May 9. Burns, a two-division titleholder from Scotland, declared bankruptcy in London with debts of more than £400,000 ($595,270) as a result of his legal battle with promoter Frank Warren. Burns reportedly was left with only £228 ($339) to his name. Warren sued Burns for £1.8 million ($2.7 million) in lost profits after the fighter jumped to rival promoter Eddie Hearn, which Warren said was breach of contract. A High Court judge ruled that Burns had violated his contract but determined that Warren wasn't owed the £1.8 million. However, the judge ordered Burns to pay £370,000 in legal and other fees. The judge also ruled that Warren owes Burns £102,000 in purses but Warren's company is defunct, which means Burns is unlikely to see a penny. The boxing business sure can be nasty.

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

Premier Boxing Champions, under the leadership of Al Haymon, suddenly is all over the boxing landscape. That led us to this poll question: **Is Al Haymon good for boxing?** Here is how you responded.

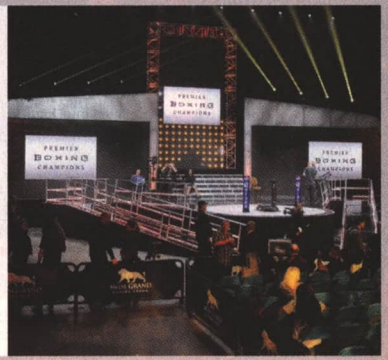
THE PERCENTAGES:

No 46.09

Yes 32.31

I don't know 21.60

Note: 1,625 readers voted



MANNY PACQUIAO

Manny Pacquiao burst onto the world boxing scene more than a decade ago, capturing our collective imagination with an intoxicating blend of speed and power that left many opponents in a heap on the canvas.

All told, Pacquiao has won 10 world titles in a record eight weight classes – four of them as lineal champion. His first was the WBC flyweight belt, which he won in Thailand just two weeks before his 20th birthday in 1998. He lost the title in his second defense in part because of weight problems, but resurfaced at junior featherweight. It changed his life and boxing.

In his stunning breakout performance, Pacquiao won the IBF title by stopping rising star Lehlo Ledwaba in eight rounds on the Oscar De La Hoya-Javier Castillejo

Manny Pacquiao has respect for all his top opponents, including Miguel Cotto (pictured).

card at the MGM Grand in 2001.

Pacquiao became a true crossover star with his compelling nine-fight series against the great Mexican trio of Marco Antonio Barrera (2-0), Erik Morales (2-1) and archrival Juan Manuel Marquez (2-1-1).

Pacquiao also boasts impressive wins over many other big-name opponents, including David Diaz, De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, Miguel Cotto, Joshua Clottey, Antonio Margarito, Shane Mosley, Brandon Rios and Tim Bradley.

The past few years have been challenging for Pacquiao. He lost a controversial split decision to Bradley in June 2012 – his first setback since 2005 – and suffered a one-punch knockout against Marquez six months later.

However, Pacquiao bounced back with three wins – Rios, Bradley in their rematch and then Chris Algieri – to dismiss any notion that he was finished as an elite fighter. His newfound momentum set up the showdown with Floyd Mayweather Jr. on May 2.

Pacquiao is currently 18-2-2, with 11 knockouts, in world-title fights.

One thing that can't be quantified, though, is the proud Filipino's profound connection with his people.

"Bringing glory to my country and my people with each victory renews my pride in my Filipino heritage," Pacquiao told THE RING. "Moving up two weight divisions to beat Oscar De La Hoya and being named Fighter of the Decade by the BWAA are my next proudest accomplishments."

Pacquiao is very busy outside of boxing. He has five children with his wife, Jinkee. He also is a congressman for the Sarangani district and a reserve officer in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He has appeared in several movies, is a recorded singer and is player/coach of a pro basketball team in his home country.

He graciously agreed to speak to THE RING about the best he has faced in 10 key categories.

BEST JAB

Oscar De La Hoya: His jab is a tactical weapon. It can set up a punch or act as a weapon.

BEST PUNCHER

Miguel Cotto: I can still feel some of those punches he threw at me. Staying on the ropes is not the best place to be when you are fighting him. He's also accurate. He's incredible.

FASTEST HANDS

Lehlo Ledwaba: His hands were blazing.

FASTEST FEET

De La Hoya: He moves so quickly and effortlessly. He is a complete athlete.

SMARTEST

Cotto: It was hard to bait him. He has seen it all. I really had to out-hustle him. He made me work.

BEST CHIN

Antonio Margarito: That fight was a war. It was brutal. I threw everything at him and he not only took it but came back for more. Incredible.

STRONGEST

Margarito: Big and strong is an understatement. His body shots hurt me several times throughout our fight.

BEST DEFENSE

Joshua Clottey: And not for a good reason, at least for the fans.

BEST SKILL SET

Juan Manuel Marquez: He is the only fighter who really could figure me out and anticipate my moves. He is a brilliant counterpuncher and a tremendous warrior.

BEST OVERALL

Several: I cannot specify one. Oscar De La Hoya, Miguel Cotto, Marco Antonio Barrera, Juan Manuel Marquez and Erik Morales all had tremendous skills. They commanded respect because they were all multi-dimensional. I had to be on my toes and give them my 100 percent concentration because they were so dangerous in the ring.

By **David Greisman**

WAIST OF TIME

IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON FROM OVER-EATING, UNDER-TRAINING CHRIS ARREOLA

The bigger a waist that Chris Arreola has, the bigger a waste he is.

Once again, he had no one to blame but himself for the shape – round – in which he showed up for a March bout against a tough but otherwise anonymous opponent named Curtis Harper. In the 10 months since Arreola lost his heavyweight title-shot rematch with Bermane Stiverne, he had gained more than 23 pounds, the second heaviest he had ever been in the ring.

It showed. He struggled against Harper, winning an eight-round decision. It was an entertaining fight that should've been a wipeout for Arreola and boxing fans benefited. But many of our cheers were in the

Chris Arreola can no longer be taken seriously.

hopes that Harper would score the upset, teaching Arreola the lesson he should've learned long ago.

There's a reason why a new generation of heavyweights is coming up while Arreola merely lingers, a cog in Al Haymon's machine who won't ever become a heavyweight titleholder unless he somehow gets lucky and who isn't doing anything for himself to make his own luck.

Somehow we're still getting reminders of this. It's been more than half a decade since he broke down in tears after getting beaten up and embarrassed by Vitali Klitschko, plodding slowly after Klitschko the entire time. It's been five years since he was out-hustled and out-thrown en route to a majority-decision loss to Tomasz Adamek.

Arreola truly seemed to take his career seriously after his first loss to Stiverne. That put him into a match with Seth Mitchell. Arreola was offended that the former college football player could somehow think himself capable of competing against lifelong fighters and promptly stated his case by quickly disposing of Mitchell, only to suffer a technical knockout in the Stiverne rematch.

He should take a look in the mirror.

Arreola came up at a time when we were starving, for whatever patriotic or jingoistic reason, for an American heavyweight challenger. He clearly wasn't starving and that was part of his charm. He was fat, foul-mouthed and in fan-friendly firefights.

Arreola being overweight and out of shape become a running joke. Except, you know, without the running. But it's no longer a laughing matter. The novelty is over. There are others more deserving of contention and our attention.

The more Arreola feeds himself, the more we're fed up with him. He should be doing less eating and more beating. That's why his fattening is maddening. He has been taking the idea of the pound-for-pound list the wrong way, is more flab than fab, and is less likely to be fitted for a title belt than he is for a corset.

We've long noted how many of America's next big heavyweight hopes have become the latest big bust. Except in Arreola's case, he not only is a big bust, but has one, too.

But in all seriousness, if Arreola isn't going to take himself seriously, then we shouldn't either.

★

Not every underdog

Philadelphia heavyweight is going to be a Rocky story, No matter how much we may want to root for Steve Cunningham, his closing credits won't bring an actual victory, never mind a moral one.

Cunningham's in phenomenal shape, ripped still at nearly 39 years old. Alas, he remains undersized against heavyweight hands. He's a skilled boxer, smooth still after nearly a decade and a half as a pro. Yet he remains underpowered, a former cruiserweight without significant enough pop to dent heavyweight chins.

That's why Cunningham got knocked out by Tyson Fury in 2013. It's why he had to come off the canvas to defeat the aged and limited Amir Mansour in 2014. It's why he went to the mat once more before stopping the unheralded Natu Visinia later last year. It's why he got robbed against Tomasz Adamek in their rematch in 2012. And it's why the judges didn't give him the credit he felt he deserved against Vyacheslav Glazkov this past March.

Undersized and underpowered against his heavier opponents. Underappreciated by the judges watching his bouts. And unfortunately undeterred despite all of the above.

That's not a good combination. Cunningham has great reason to fight, given the life-threatening health issues his daughter has battled for her entire time on this earth and the costs associated with treating her. There is more money in fighting against the odds against heavyweights than there would be in remaining within the less-lucrative limitations of the 200-pound division.

A win over Glazkov would've given him a shot at the heavyweight title. And it would've made for a more interesting outing than the uninspiring Glazkov against the awe-inspiring Wladimir Klitschko. But Cunningham didn't do enough to distance himself. Many of those watching had either man winning. Others had it a draw. The real outrage is that a pair of judges somehow saw Glazkov winning eight of 12 rounds.

The problem with controversy is that it'll inflame Cunningham, further fueling his fire within instead of snuffing it out. He will continue to put himself in danger, all in the hope of being a real-life Rocky.

Rocky wasn't real life, though. The best non-fiction example we have is James J. Braddock, the Cinderella Man whose fairytale win over Max Baer soon collided with the reality that Braddock couldn't compete against the best heavyweight of the 1930s. He held out for two years until he could cash out with the biggest possible payday, losing to the great Joe Louis.

Cunningham isn't Rocky. He won't be the Cinderella Man. He isn't even Cinderella, even if it seems as if "every eligible maiden" is getting a heavyweight title shot these days. The three judges who had Glazkov winning aren't an evil stepmother and two evil stepsisters. As likable as Cunningham is, his desire to dance with boxing's royalty will go no farther than a dalliance among the rank and file.

By **Thomas Hauser**

Only boxing-glove standardization can ensure a level playing field.

THE GLOVES ARE OFF

BOXING MUST ESTABLISH STANDARDS FOR ITS MYRIAD TYPES OF HAND COVERINGS

Boxing gloves protect fighters' hands and allow them to punch harder.

Professional fighters who weigh 150 pounds or less are generally required to wear eight-ounce gloves. Above 150 pounds, it's 10 ounces. Apart from these numbers, there's relatively little standardization. That's a problem.

As a general rule, the promoter provides the gloves used in fights and gives them to the governing state athletic commission in advance for inspection, approval and safe-keeping.

However, in recent years, an increasing number of fighters have requested that they be allowed to wear their own gloves. Most commissions now adhere to the view that a fighter can use any gloves he wants as long as the gloves meet certain specifications.

Taking New York as an example, the gloves used in a professional fight must be on an "approved" list compiled by the New York State Athletic Commission. At present, that list includes four different Everlast models, two models manufactured by Rival and single models from Ediroc, Fuel, Grant, Reebok, Cleto Reyes and Ringside.

Boxers must request NYSAC approval no later than the weigh-in to use gloves other than those provided by the promoter. The gloves provided by the boxer must be new and in the manufacturer's original sealed packaging. It is the commission's sole discretion to determine whether to allow the use of the gloves.

That all sounds good. But in truth, there are gaps in quality control from state to state. And even "approved" models have problems.

Greg Sirb is executive director of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Commission and one of the most knowledgeable boxing regulators in the country.

"The first thing we do is weigh the gloves," Sirb said. "Let's be honest about this. With all manufacturers, there can be variations in weight. The gloves don't always weigh exactly eight ounces or exactly 10 ounces. We allow for a variation of a tenth of an ounce either way. More than that can be a problem."

Other issues include poor stitching and raised seams, both of which can cause cuts. The issue of padding is more complicated.

Traditionally, the padding in boxing gloves was horsehair. In recent decades, synthetic materials have become more popular. Some gloves, such as Cleto Reyes and the Everlast MX, have foam over horsehair. Others have multiple layers of padding with each layer being a different type of foam.

One of the most significant differences among gloves, despite being equal in weight, is how the padding is distributed. The less padding there is in the punching part of a glove (as opposed to the wrist area), the harder the punch is likely to be (although that also increases the risk of damage to the puncher's hand).

By way of example, in most Everlast gloves (but not the Everlast MX), the padding is equally distributed. Cleto Reyes gloves have some of that padding shifted toward the wrist, which has earned them the reputation of being a "puncher's glove."

Here, Sirb notes, "Before we approve a glove in Pennsylvania, we take a sample from the manufacturer and cut it in two at the wrist. Then we weigh the wrist and punching parts of the glove separately. In an eight-ounce glove, I don't like to see much more than two ounces in the wrist. But one of the problems we have is that you can get three gloves from the same manufacturer and they look good, but even with the same model there are variations from glove to glove."

There are no specific standards anywhere in the United States that govern the hardness and resilience of gloves. Also, as Sirb notes, "Some of the heavyweights today have huge hands. They need specially manufactured gloves but the gloves still only weigh 10 ounces. So right there, you're redistributing the padding over a larger surface and there's less of a cushion."

A 10-ounce pillow and a 10-ounce rock weigh the same. But most people would rather get hit in the head by the pillow.

The color of boxing gloves is another area that hasn't been fully explored. In days of old, fighters wore brown gloves. Then black became the fashion. With the advent of color television, red came into vogue. Now most state athletic commissions allow fighters to choose their own color with no clear guidelines to follow.

When Bernard Hopkins fought Sergey Kovalev on Nov. 8, 2014, in Atlantic City, "The Alien" wore electric blue gloves with neon pink and yellow thumbs.

That raises an intriguing issue. Does the color of a fighter's gloves make a difference in a fight? Are some colors more difficult for a fighter to see and react to as a punch hurtles toward him? Are judges more likely to see a scoring blow if the glove that lands is a certain color?

No one has conducted a serious scientific study to answer these questions.

Also, when fighters who are about to participate in a major fight select the gloves that they intend to wear, they choose an "A" pair and a backup pair (the latter to be used if a glove replacement is necessary during the fight). On occasion, the "A" pair and backup pair are different colors.

That's the height of stupidity. What happens under those circumstances if a glove needs to be replaced? Is the action halted to replace both gloves rather than one? Or would the fight proceed with the fighter wearing differently colored gloves?

The Association of Boxing Commissions needs to set standards for gloves. The concept of a level playing field for fighters is at stake. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book ("Thomas Hauser on Boxing: Another Year Inside the Sweet Science") was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

Actor Jamie Foxx will portray Mike Tyson in an upcoming film that will be directed by Martin Scorsese.

RAGING FOXX

People can defend or denounce **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** and **Manny Pacquiao** all they want but the real question in boxing is this: What's the best movie, "Rocky" or "Raging Bull"?

There might soon be a third flick in the debate. **Martin Scorsese**, whose stylized fight scenes in "Raging Bull" made him a film-school hero, will try to out-masterpiece himself by directing a movie based on the life of **Mike Tyson** – starring **Jamie Foxx** in the lead role. Foxx made the announcement in an interview on New York radio station Power 105 in mid-March.

The part will reportedly involve some computer de-aging to depict the enfant terrible we came to love – or at least fear – in the 1980s but Foxx said he'd already followed the Robert DeNiro method and bulked up to more than 200 pounds. "I want it to be where his kids look at me and say, 'That's dad,'" stated Foxx.

The unnamed movie, which will be scripted by **Terence Winter** (he also wrote Scorsese's "The Wolf of Wall Street"), has long been a pet project for Foxx. He met Tyson in the 1980s after doing a standup comedy routine that included a joke about the fighter, who happened to be in the audience. In the radio interview he hinted that the story would revolve around money. It's a common theme now, how Tyson went from a wealthy rage-a-holic to a broke-ass disgrace whose only redemption is the peace of having nothing left to steal.

Scorsese has proven chops when it comes to filming boxing. We'll see if he can still do it without flinching.

Not likely to be hired as story consultants are the campus police of **Oakland University** on the outskirts of Detroit. As a warning about bad road conditions, a tweet sent from the OUPD account showed a photo of Tyson with the words, "DRIVE THAFELY EVERYONE! THE ROADS ARE THLIPPERY." They later apologized.

In Australia, 23-year-old featherweight **Braydon Smith** died two days after collapsing in his dressing room following a 10-round decision loss to **John Vincent Moralde**. The son of respected trainer **Brendon Smith**, Braydon could not be revived from the coma doctors induced to try to save him. And so the decision was made to remove him from life support. Smith's death immediately triggered calls from the Australian medical community for a ban on boxing.

Oscar Diaz also died in late February due to injuries from a fight, though he endured seven years of debilitating brain damage first. Diaz collapsed in his corner after the 10th round of a welterweight fight against **Delvin Rodriguez** in July 2008. He spent two months in a coma and after that, according to his brother, was unable to walk on his own. He was 32 years old.

Among the 10 people killed in a mid-air collision between two helicopters in the Argentine wilderness was two-time Olympic boxer **Alexis Vastine**, from France. He was participating in a French reality show called "Dropped" – yet another capture-the-flag competition featuring celebrities who must "struggle to survive" outside their comfort zones – and was on his way to the filming location with crew and other contestants, including Olympic swimmer **Camille Muffat** and yachtswoman **Florence Arthaud**, who were also killed. No cause for the accident had been announced at press time.

This column always brings the sunshine, doesn't it?

Jim Lampley and **Max Kellerman** signed new multi-year deals with **HBO Sports**, ensuring they will remain the faces and voices of boxing on that network going into the PBC era.

And perhaps overlooked in all the Mayweather-Pacquiao and Alvarez-Kirkland excitement, May 15 will feature another superfight – this one a charity match between many-time heavyweight champion **Evander Holyfield** and two-time presidential candidate **Mitt Romney**. Please apply masking tape to the rest of the text and then write in your own punchline. Suggested topics include: Romney DQ'd after biting himself, Romney wins a unanimous decision by promising to not tax the judges, no-contest declared after both fighters ignore the final bell, Romney DQ'd again after repeated low blows about Holyfield's finances, Holyfield says "F--k charity" and wins with a crushing right hand to Romney's temple.

HITTING THE SPEED BAG

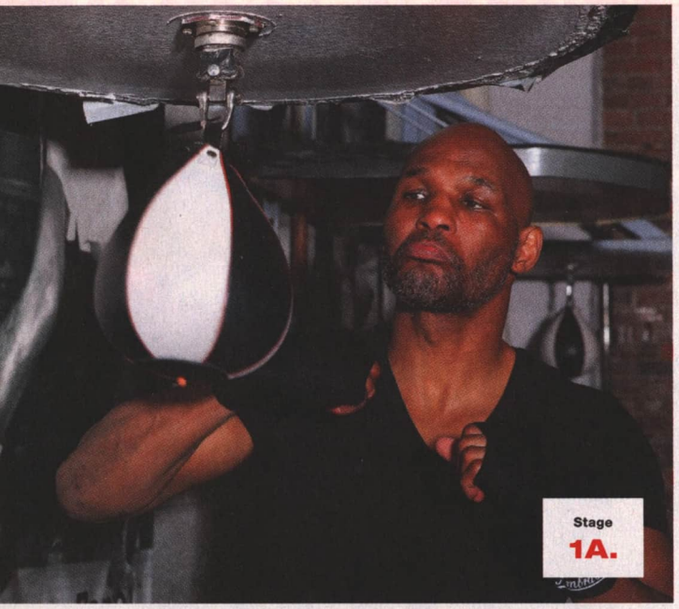
'THE IMPORTANCE OF HITTING THE SPEED BAG IS TO BUILD SPEED, ACCURACY AND TIMING'

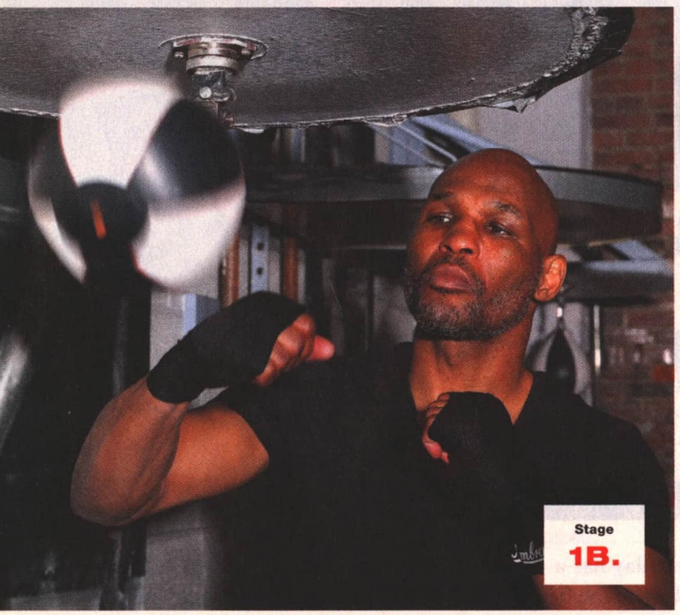
Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

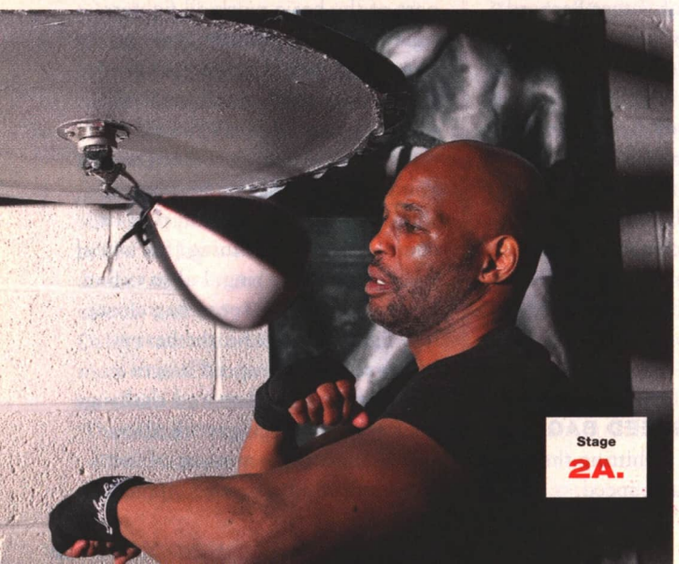
Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why he plays the leading role in "Perfect Execution."

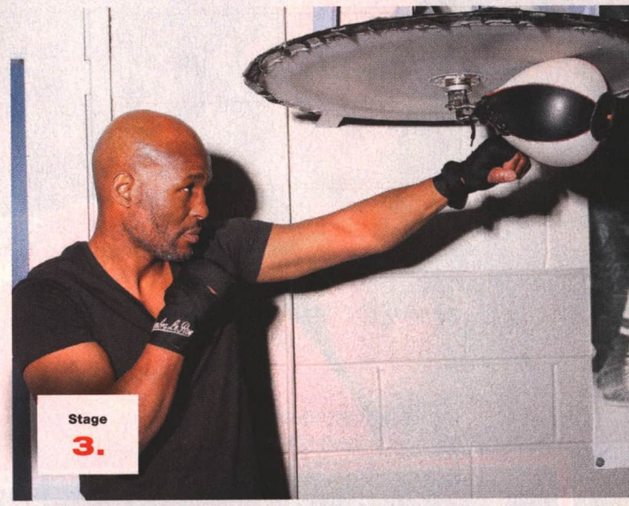
Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins demonstrates a particular skill and explains how to execute it. Photographs help you understand the moves. Our website, RingTV.com, also features an accompanying video that allows you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

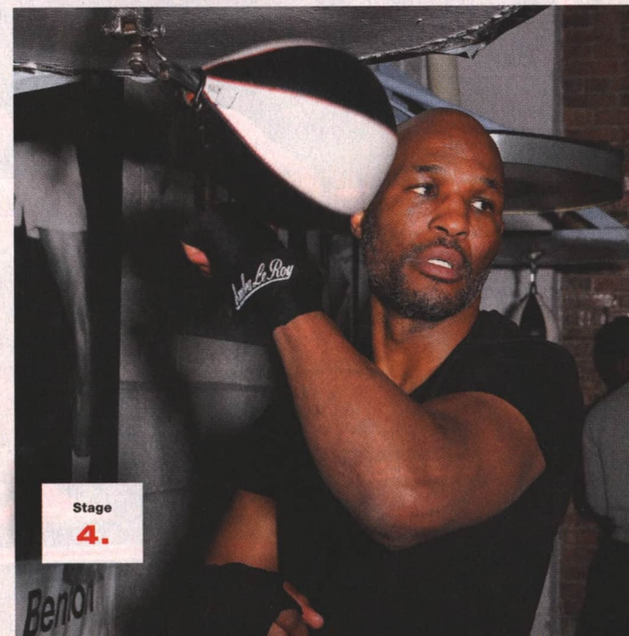
THE MONTH: HITTING THE SPEED BAG. "The importance of hitting the speed bag is to build speed, accuracy and timing. It also builds hand and eye coordination. It is a part of the basic work all fighters start off doing and it really is an important part of training that all world-class fighters still perform today. Speed-bag work ties all of the things that you want to do. Once you build that rhythm and hit the speed bag, it's an essential part of completing your training [for when] you step into the ring. I always find the time to hit the speed bag closer to a fight. I like to hit the heavy bag first, then the speed bag to loosen your shoulders and challenge your eyes. Speed-bag work also contributes to the amount of focus you need to put into every punch."











ONE-HANDED SPEED-BAG

Stage 1. This is the start of a process. It's important for your timing A-B. You build a rhythm to make a perfect tune. In any gym, you'll hear that perfect speed bag rhythm that every gym has. I call it boxing music. If you're right-handed, you might want to put more focus on your left hand to increase and build more coordination in the off-hand. I would say it's like basketball. If you can only dribble with your right hand, you're not going to be any good, so you over-compensate by working with your left. It's the opposite if you're left-handed. You want to put more time in with your right. I've done that many times because I want to make my left more accurate. You need to be patient.

TWO-HANDED SPEED-BAG WORK

Stage 2. Hitting the speed bag with both hands is one of the most important things you can do in building rhythm and keeping the blood flow A-C. It works on the final touches as you get closer to a fight and lighten up on the rest of your more physical training. It's like jumping rope, though, because it takes time to build that rhythm.

PINNING THE SPEED BAG

Stage 3. The reason why you want to pin the speed bag against the backboard is to help jab placement and again build punching accuracy. You need to be patient with this too. I can't stress that enough. Pinning the bag is for more advanced fighters but you won't become a more advanced fighter if you don't build toward pinning the bag. Here I pin the bag with my left hand because I want to improve my jab and freeze my opponent's head.

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN HITTING THE SPEED BAG

Stage 4. Here I'm looking away, the last thing you want to do when hitting the speed bag or obviously in a fight. You always need to keep your focus, especially when hitting the speed bag. As I said earlier in the intro, speed-bag work contributes to the focus you need to put into every punch. Everything you work on in the gym is to simulate everything that you do in a fight. I'm there in the ring, you hear things, people chanting your name, fans calling out. You never take your eye off the speed bag, like you never take your eye off an opponent when you're fighting. Someone comes into the gym and says "Hey B-Hop," I'm not going to break my focus when I'm hitting the speed bag just like I won't when I'm in the ring. RING

Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals appears each month in THE RING. The feature includes a video component. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code at left or go to http://bit.ly/perfect-execution-speed-bag.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

SERGEY KOVALEV

By **Michael Rosenthal**

Sergey Kovalev proved against Jean Pascal that he can overcome adversity.

Sergey Kovalev showed us something new again.

Against Bernard Hopkins in November, the IBF, WBA and WBO light heavyweight titleholder demonstrated that he is more than a puncher by winning a shutout decision. Against Jean Pascal on March 14 in Montreal, he proved that he can stare adversity in the face, beat it down and emerge with another memorable victory that enhances his image as a must-see attraction.

Kovalev should thank Jean Pascal, who could've rolled over after a brutal third round but bravely decided to turn the fight into a short-lived war he was destined to lose by knockout 1:03 into the eighth round.

What might've been just another stoppage – albeit against an elite opponent who had never been knocked out – became more compelling because Kovalev had to dig much deeper than usual to have his hand raised in victory.

For the record, this was a close fight only for the few hair-raising rounds – four through six – that Pascal was able to land his wild, hard rights. After the sixth round, it was all Kovalev. In the seventh, Pascal seemed to be depleted (hurt?) to the point where Kovalev knew he had his man.

In the eighth, the Russian attacked with menacing purpose in an attempt to end the fight then and there. And when two hard rights found their mark on Pascal's battered face, referee Luis Pabon had seen enough.

Another entertaining victory for Kovalev. Another step toward major stardom.

POUND FOR POUND: The last time Andre Ward (No. 4 last month) fought was on Nov. 16, 2013, still within the 18 months of inactivity permitted for RING champions. However, the last Top 5 fighter he faced was Chad Dawson on Sept. 8, 2012, well over the two-year limit allowed to face such an opponent. Ward still had nothing scheduled at press time. Therefore, Ward was removed from the super middleweight ratings and his pound-for-pound status was revoked. Everyone previously below him, from No. 5 Roman Gonzalez to No. 10 Canelo Alvarez, moved up a spot and Gennady Golovkin moved in at No. 10. The following weekend Golovkin stopped Martin Murray (unrated) and moved up to No. 9, knocking Alvarez back to the bottom of the list. Alvarez was then knocked off the list entirely by Sergey Kovalev, who took the No. 10 spot with another stellar performance, this time an eighth-round knockout of Jean Pascal (unrated).

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Chris Arreola (No. 9 last month) was dropped after an unimpressive eight-round decision over unrated Curtis Harper. Longtime gatekeeper Tony Thompson returned to claim No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Ward was stripped of his RING championship and removed from the list after going more than two years without scheduling a fight against a Top 5 opponent.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Golovkin (No. 1 last month) went into what for him is "deep water" before scoring an 11th-round TKO over Murray, who dropped from No. 6 to No. 7.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Robert Guerrero (No. 8 last month) made a valiant stand but ultimately took a beating from Keith Thurman, who won a near-shutout decision. Thurman rose from No. 7 to No. 5 and Guerrero fell to No. 9.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Adrien Broner was elevated from No. 5 to No. 4 after cruising to a unanimous decision over an uncharacteristically listless John Molina (unrated). Also, Ruslan Provodnikov rose from No. 4 to No. 3 as Chris Algieri (No. 3 last month) was demoted to No. 5.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Francisco Vargas (No. 7 last month) moved up two notches after stopping unrated Will Tomlinson, swapping places with No. 5-rated Diego Magdaleno. Magdaleno was then dropped for fighting above weight and indicating that he would move to 135 pounds. After others slid up to fill the gap, undefeated Mexican Adrian Estrella entered at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Carl Frampton (No. 1 last month) retained his IBF title with a five-round smackdown of No. 5-rated Chris Avalos. Avalos left the ratings and the vacancy at No. 10 was taken by Hugo Ruiz, who was moving up from 118 pounds.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Ruiz's departure for heavier pastures left the No. 6 spot empty, so everyone moved up a notch and Japan's Ryosuke Iwasa said hello to No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: David Sanchez replaced Kohei Kono at No. 10 after stopping Juan Alberto Rosas (unrated) in 10 rounds. Zolani Tete (No. 5 last month) stopped unrated Paul Butler in eight rounds on Butler's home turf. Tete moved up to No. 4.

FLYWEIGHTS: Amnat Ruenroeng successfully defended his IBF title against Zou Shiming (unrated), winning a unanimous decision in Macau. The Thai fighter jumped three spots, from No. 5 to No. 2. Zou took his first loss.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No. 1-rated Hekkie Budler held his rating after a solid 12-round win over Jesus Silvestre (unrated) in Monte Carlo on the Golvkin-Murray undercard. Oswaldo Novoa (No. 7 last month) dropped to No. 10 after fighting to a draw with unremarkable novice Mario Andrade.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

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Kovalev should thank Jean Pascal, who could've rolled over after a brutal third round but bravely decided to turn the fight into a short-lived war he was destined to lose by knockout 1:03 into the eighth round.

What might've been just another stoppage – albeit against an elite opponent who had never been knocked out – became more compelling because Kovalev had to dig much deeper than usual to have his hand raised in victory.

For the record, this was a close fight only for the few hair-raising rounds – four through six – that Pascal was able to land his wild, hard rights. After the sixth round, it was all Kovalev. In the seventh, Pascal seemed to be depleted (hurt?) to the point where Kovalev knew he had his man.

In the eighth, the Russian attacked with menacing purpose in an attempt to end the fight then and there. And when two hard rights found their mark on Pascal's battered face, referee Luis Pabon had seen enough.

Another entertaining victory for Kovalev. Another step toward major stardom.

POUND FOR POUND: The last time Andre Ward (No. 4 last month) fought was on Nov. 16, 2013, still within the 18 months of inactivity permitted for RING champions. However, the last Top 5 fighter he faced was Chad Dawson on Sept. 8, 2012, well over the two-year limit allowed to face such an opponent. Ward still had nothing scheduled at press time. Therefore, Ward was removed from the super middleweight ratings and his pound-for-pound status was revoked. Everyone previously below him, from No. 5 Roman Gonzalez to No. 10 Canelo Alvarez, moved up a spot and Gennady Golovkin moved in at No. 10. The following weekend Golovkin stopped Martin Murray (unrated) and moved up to No. 9, knocking Alvarez back to the bottom of the list. Alvarez was then knocked off the list entirely by Sergey Kovalev, who took the No. 10 spot with another stellar performance, this time an eighth-round knockout of Jean Pascal (unrated).

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Chris Arreola (No. 9 last month) was dropped after an unimpressive eight-round decision over unrated Curtis Harper. Longtime gatekeeper Tony Thompson returned to claim No. 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Ward was stripped of his RING championship and removed from the list after going more than two years without scheduling a fight against a Top 5 opponent.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Golovkin (No. 1 last month) went into what for him is "deep water" before scoring an 11th-round TKO over Murray, who dropped from No. 6 to No. 7.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Robert Guerrero (No. 8 last month) made a valiant stand but ultimately took a beating from Keith Thurman, who won a near-shutout decision. Thurman rose from No. 7 to No. 5 and Guerrero fell to No. 9.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Adrien Broner was elevated from No. 5 to No. 4 after cruising to a unanimous decision over an uncharacteristically listless John Molina (unrated). Also, Ruslan Provodnikov rose from No. 4 to No. 3 as Chris Algieri (No. 3 last month) was demoted to No. 5.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Francisco Vargas (No. 7 last month) moved up two notches after stopping unrated Will Tomlinson, swapping places with No. 5-rated Diego Magdaleno. Magdaleno was then dropped for fighting above weight and indicating that he would move to 135 pounds. After others slid up to fill the gap, undefeated Mexican Adrian Estrella entered at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Carl Frampton (No. 1 last month) retained his IBF title with a five-round smackdown of No. 5-rated Chris Avalos. Avalos left the ratings and the vacancy at No. 10 was taken by Hugo Ruiz, who was moving up from 118 pounds.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Ruiz's departure for heavier pastures left the No. 6 spot empty, so everyone moved up a notch and Japan's Ryosuke Iwasa said hello to No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: David Sanchez replaced Kohei Kono at No. 10 after stopping Juan Alberto Rosas (unrated) in 10 rounds. Zolani Tete (No. 5 last month) stopped unrated Paul Butler in eight rounds on Butler's home turf. Tete moved up to No. 4.

FLYWEIGHTS: Amnat Ruenroeng successfully defended his IBF title against Zou Shiming (unrated), winning a unanimous decision in Macau. The Thai fighter jumped three spots, from No. 5 to No. 2. Zou took his first loss.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No. 1-rated Hekkie Budler held his rating after a solid 12-round win over Jesus Silvestre (unrated) in Monte Carlo on the Golvkin-Murray undercard. Oswaldo Novoa (No. 7 last month) dropped to No. 10 after fighting to a draw with unremarkable novice Mario Andrade.

No. 3-rated Tyson Fury (right) had no problem getting past Christian Hammer.

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
514 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
388 • Russia • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
70 • U.S. • 33-0-0 (32 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
162 • U.K. • 24-0-0 (18 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
180 • Bulgaria • 20-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
53 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. BERMANE STIVERNE
100 • Canada • 24-2-1 (21 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
54 • Ukraine • 20-0-1 (12 KOs)

8. MIKE PEREZ
42 • Cuba • 21-1-1 (13 KOs)

9. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
20 • Uzbek. • 33-2-1 (20 KOs)

10. TONY THOMPSON
2 • U.S. • 40-5-0 (27 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
182 • Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. MARCO HUCK
159 • Germany • 38-2-1 (26 KOs)

2. GRIGORY DROZD
77 • Russia • 39-1-0 (27 KOs)

3. DENIS LEBEDEV
269 • Russia • 26-2-0 (20 KOs)

4. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
511 • Poland • 49-3-1 (35 KOs)

5. OLA AFOLABI
316 • U.K. • 21-3-4 (10 KOs)

6. FIRAT ARSLAN
125 • Germany • 34-8-2 (21 KOs)

7. ILUNGA MAKABU
89 • Congo • 18-1-0 (17 KOs)

8. THABISO MCHUNU
75 • S. Africa • 17-1-0 (11 KOs)

9. YOURI KALENGA
40 • Congo • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV
35 • Russia • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
94 • Canada • 25-1-0 (21 KOs)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
114 • Russia • 27-0-1 (24 KOs)

2. BERNARD HOPKINS
460 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

3. JEAN PASCAL
89 • Canada • 29-3-1 (17 KOs)

4. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
143 • Germany • 46-2-0 (34 KOs)

5. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
54 • Colombia • 16-0-0 (9 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
152 • Malawi • 24-2-2 (10 KOs)

7. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
45 • Poland • 26-3-0 (15 KOs)

8. NADJIB MOHAMMEDI
27 • France • 37-3-0 (23 KOs)

9. GABRIEL CAMPILLO
25 • Spain • 25-6-1 (12 KOs)

10. ARTUR BETERBIEV
15 • Russia • 7-0-0 (7 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. CARL FROCH
460 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)

2. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
285 • Armenia • 42-4-0 (28 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
172 • U.K. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. JAMES DEGALE
94 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (14 KOs)

5. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
293 • Russia • 47-4-1 (27 KOs)

6. ANTHONY DIRRELL
32 • U.S. • 27-0-1 (22 KOs)

7. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
37 • Mexico • 31-0-0 (24 KOs)

8. ANDRE DIRRELL
30 • U.S. • 24-1-0 (16 KOs)

9. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.
23 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (32 KOs)

10. FELIX STURM
20 • Germany • 39-4-3 (18 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C MIGUEL COTTO
42 • P.R. • 39-4-0 (32 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
172 • Kaz. • 32-0-0 (29 KOs)

2. PETER QUILLIN
147 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. SERGIO MARTINEZ
259 • Argentina • 51-3-2 (28 KOs)

4. DANIEL GEALE
302 • Australia • 31-3-0 (16 KOs)

5. HASSAN N'DAM
62 • Cameroon • 31-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. ANDY LEE
15 • Ireland • 34-2-0 (24 KOs)

7. MARTIN MURRAY
173 • U.K. • 29-2-1 (12 KOs)

8. JERMAIN TAYLOR
24 • U.S. • 33-4-1 (20 KOs)

9. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
17 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)

10. DANIEL JACOBS
15 • U.S. • 28-1-0 (25 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
151 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. CANELO ALVAREZ
228 • Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)

2. ERISLANDY LARA
195 • Cuba • 20-2-2 (12 KOs)

3. AUSTIN TROUT
147 • U.S. • 28-2-0 (15 KOs)

4. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
102 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

5. VANES MARTIROSYAN
277 • U.S. • 35-1-1 (21 KOs)

6. JERMELL CHARLO
72 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (11 KOs)

7. JERMALL CHARLO
41 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
24 • U.S. • 34-5-0 (19 KOs)

9. CARLOS MOLINA
195 • Mexico • 22-6-2 (6 KOs)

10. JULIAN WILLIAMS
15 • U.S. • 18-0-1 (11 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
184 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. MANNY PACQUIAO
281 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)

2. KELL BROOK
205 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
47 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
146 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)

5. KEITH THURMAN
107 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (21 KOs)

6. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
120 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)

7. SHAWN PORTER
68 • U.S. • 25-1-1 (16 KOs)

8. MARCOS MAIDANA
67 • Argentina • 35-5-0 (31 KOs)

9. ROBERT GUERRERO
139 • U.S. • 32-3-1 (18 KOs)

10. DIEGO CHAVES
15 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C DANNY GARCIA
207 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
207 • Argentina • 36-3-0 (34 KOs)

2. LAMONT PETERSON
109 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (17 KOs)

3. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
120 • Russia • 24-3-0 (17 KOs)

4. ADRIEN BRONER
47 • U.S. • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)

5. CHRIS ALGIERI
41 • U.S. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
50 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. VIKTOR POSTOL
84 • Ukraine • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV
143 • Russia • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

9. THOMAS DULORME
16 • P.R. • 22-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. MAURICIO HERRERA
9 • U.S. • 21-5-0 (7 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C TERENCE CRAWFORD
91 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. OMAR FIGUEROA
63 • U.S. • 24-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN
139 • Mexico • 29-7-1 (17 KOs)

3. RICHAR ABRIL
27 • Cuba • 19-3-1 (8 KOs)

4. MICKEY BEY
28 • U.S. • 21-1-1 (10 KOs)

5. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
242 • Mexico • 35-4-0 (13 KOs)

6. JUAN DIAZ
60 • U.S. • 40-4-0 (19 KOs)

7. JORGE LINARES
55 • Venezuela • 38-3-0 (25 KOs)

8. SHARIF BOGERE
21 • Uganda • 26-1-0 (18 KOs)

9. KEVIN MITCHELL
8 • U.K. • 39-2-0 (29 KOs)

10. DIERRY JEAN
17 • Canada • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
273 • Japan • 22-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RANCES BARTHELEMY
64 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (12 KOs)

3. TAKASHI MIURA
103 • Japan • 28-2-2 (21 KOs)

4. BRYAN VASQUEZ
15 • Costa Rica • 34-1-0 (18 KOs)

5. FRANCISCO VARGAS
37 • Mexico • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

6. ROMAN MARTINEZ
342 • P.R. • 28-2-2 (17 KOs)

7. ORLANDO SALIDO
27 • Mexico • 42-12 -2 (29 KOs)

8. JAVIER FORTUNA
21 • Dom. Rep. • 27-0-1 (20 KOs)

9. JOSE PEDRAZA
10 • P.R. • 19-0-0 (12 KOs)

10. ADRIAN ESTRELLA
1 • Mexico • 22-0-0 (20 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JHONNY GONZALEZ
208 • Mexico • 57-8-0 (48 KOs)

2. NICHOLAS WALTERS
120 • Jamaica • 25-0-0 (21 KOs)

3. ABNER MARES
99 • Mexico • 29-1-1 (15 KOs)

4. VASYL LOMACHENKO
47 • Ukraine • 3-1-0 (1 KO)*

5. EVGENY GRADOVICH
108 • Russia • 19-0-1 (9 KOs)

6. NONITO DONAIRE
65 • Phil. • 33-3-0 (21 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
68 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. LEE SELBY
54 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
24 • Argentina • 26-1-0 (20 KOs)

10. JAYSON VELEZ
17 • P.R. • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
229 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. CARL FRAMPTON
131 • U.K. • 20-0-0 (14 KOs)

2. LEO SANTA CRUZ
99 • U.S. • 29-0-1 (17 KOs)

3. SCOTT QUIGG
122 • U.K. • 30-0-2 (22 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
54 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. KID GALAHAD
32 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (9 KOs)

6. ANDRES GUTIERREZ
27 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

7. SHINGO WAKE
18 • Japan • 18-4-2 (11 KOs)

8. REY VARGAS
15 • Mexico • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)

9. ALBERT PAGARA
12 • Phil. • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)

10. HUGO RUIZ
4 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (31 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

**** The record shown for Vasyl Lomachenko is the one listed by boxrec.com. However, Lomachenko was paid to participate in the World Series of Boxing six times during 2013, with a record of 6-0.***

THE RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
177 • Japan • 22-0-2 (16 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
26 • Dom. Rep. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
365 • Panama • 35-3-1 (12 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
223 • Japan • 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
218 • Phil. • 35-3-3 (20 KOs)
6. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
86 • Japan • 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
7. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
99 • U.K. • 25-2-1 (12 KOs)
8. **RANDY CABALLERO**
22 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
9. **KIKO MARTINEZ**
15 • Spain • 32-5-0 (24 KOs)
10. **RYOSUKE IWASA**
4 • Japan • 19-1-0 (12 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
12 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
150 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
99 • Thailand • 33-4-1 (30 KOs)
4. **ZOLANI TETE**
69 • S. Africa • 20-3-0 (17 KOs)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
255 • Argentina • 43-2-2 (23 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
101 • Phil. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
130 • Thailand • 55-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
96 • Mexico • 29-3-0 (24 KOs)
9. **MCJOE ARROYO**
41 • P.R. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
10. **DAVID SANCHEZ**
6 • Mexico • 27-2-2 (21 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
72 • Nicaragua • 42-0-0 (36 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
103 • Mexico • 31-2-0 (22 KOs)
2. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
46 • Thailand • 15-0-0 (5 KOs)
3. **BRIAN VILORIA**
194 • U.S. • 35-4-0 (21 KOs)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
150 • Mexico • 51-8-0 (30 KOs)
5. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
182 • Argentina • 35-1-0 (19 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
54 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
73 • Mexico • 32-4-1 (28 KOs)
8. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
29 • P.R. • 15-2-0 (13 KOs)
9. **KAZUTO IOKA**
27 • Japan • 16-1-0 (10 KOs)
10. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
15 • Phil. • 21-2-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
181 • Phil. • 34-1-4 (20 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
104 • Mexico • 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
2. **MOISES FUENTES**
108 • Mexico • 20-2-1 (11 KOs)
3. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
205 • Mexico • 30-3-1 (19 KOs)
4. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
27 • Japan • 20-5-0 (10 KOs)
5. **FELIX ALVARADO**
106 • Nicaragua • 19-2-0 (16 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
19 • Phil. • 32-1-0 (12 KOs)
7. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
15 • Japan • 21-2-1 (8 KOs)
8. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
46 • Phil. • 22-1-1 (17 KOs)
9. **RAUL GARCIA**
12 • Mexico • 36-3-1 (22 KOs)
10. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
100 • Peru • 32-9-0 (13 KOs)

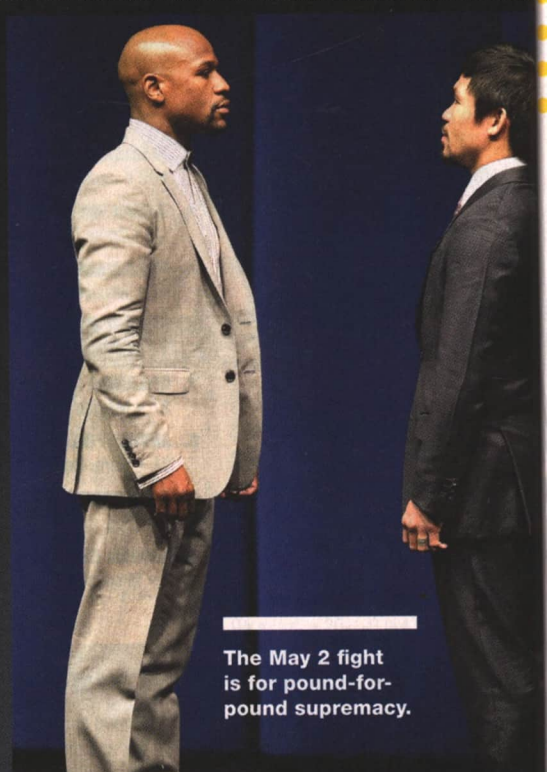
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
131 • S. Africa • 28-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
104 • Japan • 28-7-0 (11 KOs)
3. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
197 • Thailand • 37-0-0 (12 KOs)
4. **KOSEI TANAKA**
21 • Japan • 4-0-0 (2 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
25 • Thailand • 10-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
128 • Nicaragua • 28-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **RYUJI HARA**
82 • Japan • 18-1-0 (10 KOs)
8. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
19 • China • 25-6-1 (14 KOs)
9. **DENVER CUELLO**
19 • Phil. • 35-5-6 (23 KOs)
10. **OSWALDO NOVOA**
59 • Mexico • 14-5-2 (9 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
184 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
242 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
591 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)
4. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
42 • Nicaragua • 42-0-0 (36 KOs)
5. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
83 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
6. **TIM BRADLEY**
237 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
420 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
8. **CARL FROCH**
67 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
9. **GENNADY GOLOVKIN**
6 • Kaz. • 32-0-0 (29 KOs)
10. **SERGEY KOVALEV**
2 • Russia • 27-0-1 (24 KOs)



The May 2 fight is for pound-for-pound supremacy.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

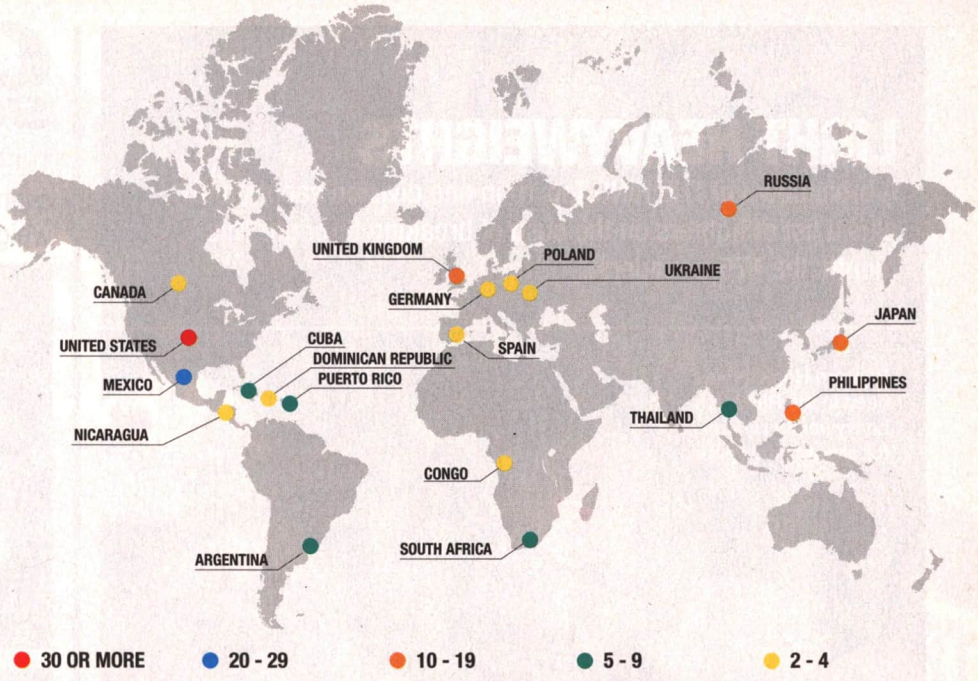
RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

UNITED STATES	35*	↓ 3
MEXICO	26	↑ 2
UNITED KINGDOM	15	
JAPAN	14	
PHILIPPINES	11	
RUSSIA	10	
ARGENTINA	7	
PUERTO RICO	7	
CUBA	6	
SOUTH AFRICA	5	
THAILAND	5	
CANADA	4	
GERMANY	4	
UKRAINE	4	
NICARAGUA	3	
CONGO	2	
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
POLAND	2	
SPAIN	2	
ARMENIA	1	
AUSTRALIA	1	
BULGARIA	1	
CAMEROON	1	
CHINA	1	
COLOMBIA	1	
COSTA RICA	1	
FRANCE	1	
IRELAND	1	
JAMAICA	1	
KAZAKHSTAN	1	
MALAWI	1	
PANAMA	1	
PERU	1	
UGANDA	1	
UZBEKISTAN	1	
VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *None.*

Countries in: *None.*

** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*



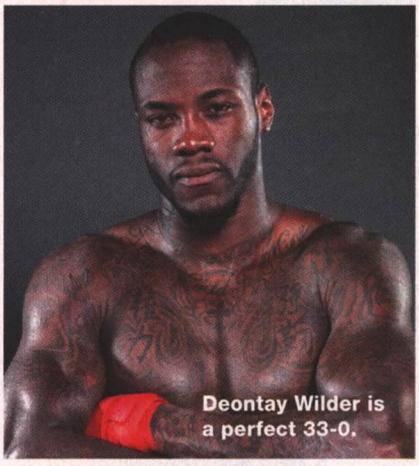
EAST VS. WEST

Fighters from Eastern Europe – such as Sergey Kovalev and Vasyl Lomachenko – are making a strong impact on boxing but their western counterparts are more than holding their own. Here's how Eastern Europeans – those from former Soviet Bloc countries – compare to Western Europeans in THE RING Ratings.

DIVISION	EAST	WEST
HEAVYWEIGHTS	4	1
CRUISERWEIGHTS	4	3
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	3
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	2	4
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	1	3
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	0	0
WELTERWEIGHTS	0	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	3	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	1
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	0	0
FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	1
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	0	3
BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	2
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	0
FLYWEIGHTS	0	0
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	0
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	0
TOTAL	19	23

Note: *Germany was divided into East and West during the Soviet era. It is considered Western Europe for the purposes of this chart. Also, Kazakhstan and Armenia are included in Eastern Europe even though they also straddle Asia.*

PERFECT RECORDS


Deontay Wilder is a perfect 33-0.

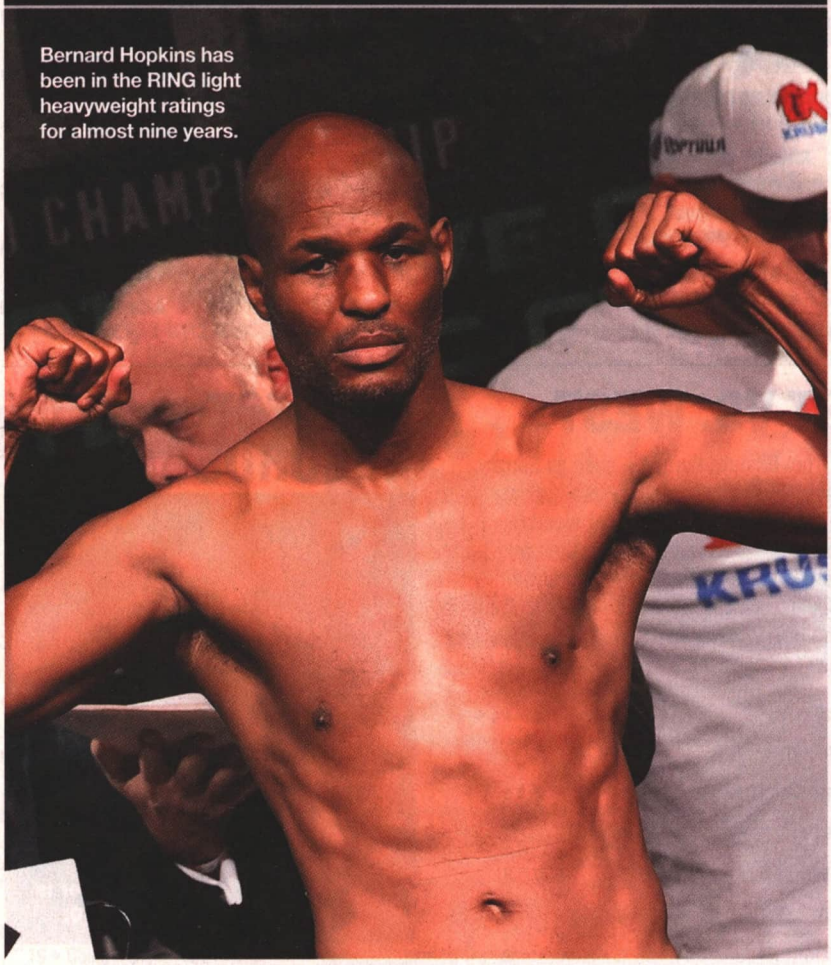
There are a surprising 55 undefeated fighters among the 180 rated by THE RING – 30.5 percent. Of those, 37 have perfect records (no draws). Here are the fighters with perfect records with the most victories (as of March 22).

47	FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
42	ROMAN GONZALEZ
37	WANHENG MENAYOTHIN
33	KELL BROOK
33	DEONTAY WILDER
32	GENNADY GOLOVKIN
31	TOMOKI KAMEDA
31	PETER QUILLIN
31	GILBERTO RAMIREZ
29	DANNY GARCIA

FOCUS ON . . .

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the 175-pounders.



Bernard Hopkins has been in the RING light heavyweight ratings for almost nine years.

MOST WEEKS RATED: BERNARD HOPKINS **460**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: ARTUR BETERBIEV **15**

OLDEST: HOPKINS **50**

YOUNGEST: ANDRZEJ FONFARA **27**

MOST FIGHTS: HOPKINS **64**

FEWEST FIGHTS: BETERBIEV **7**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ELEIDER ALVAREZ, BETERBIEV **100 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: GABRIEL CAMPILLO **78.1 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: JUERGEN BRAEHMER **34**

FEWEST KOS: BETERBIEV **7**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: ALVAREZ **16 FIGHTS**

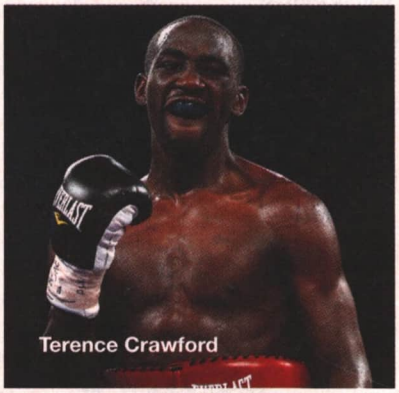
ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: SERGEY KOVALEV **NO. 10**

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: KOVALEV **(WBA, IBF AND WBO)**, ADONIS STEVENSON **(RING AND WBC)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): NATHAN CLEVERLY, OLEKSANDR GVOZDYK, EGOR MEKHONTSEV, THOMAS OOSTHUIZEN, ERIK SKOGLUND

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.



Terence Crawford

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

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WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: NICHOLAS WALTERS
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

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MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

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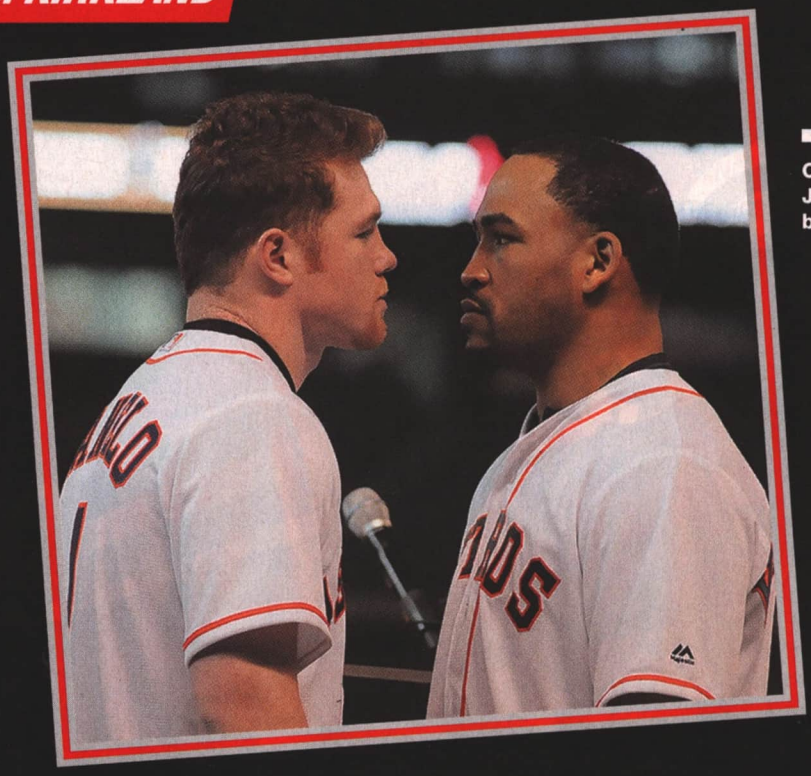
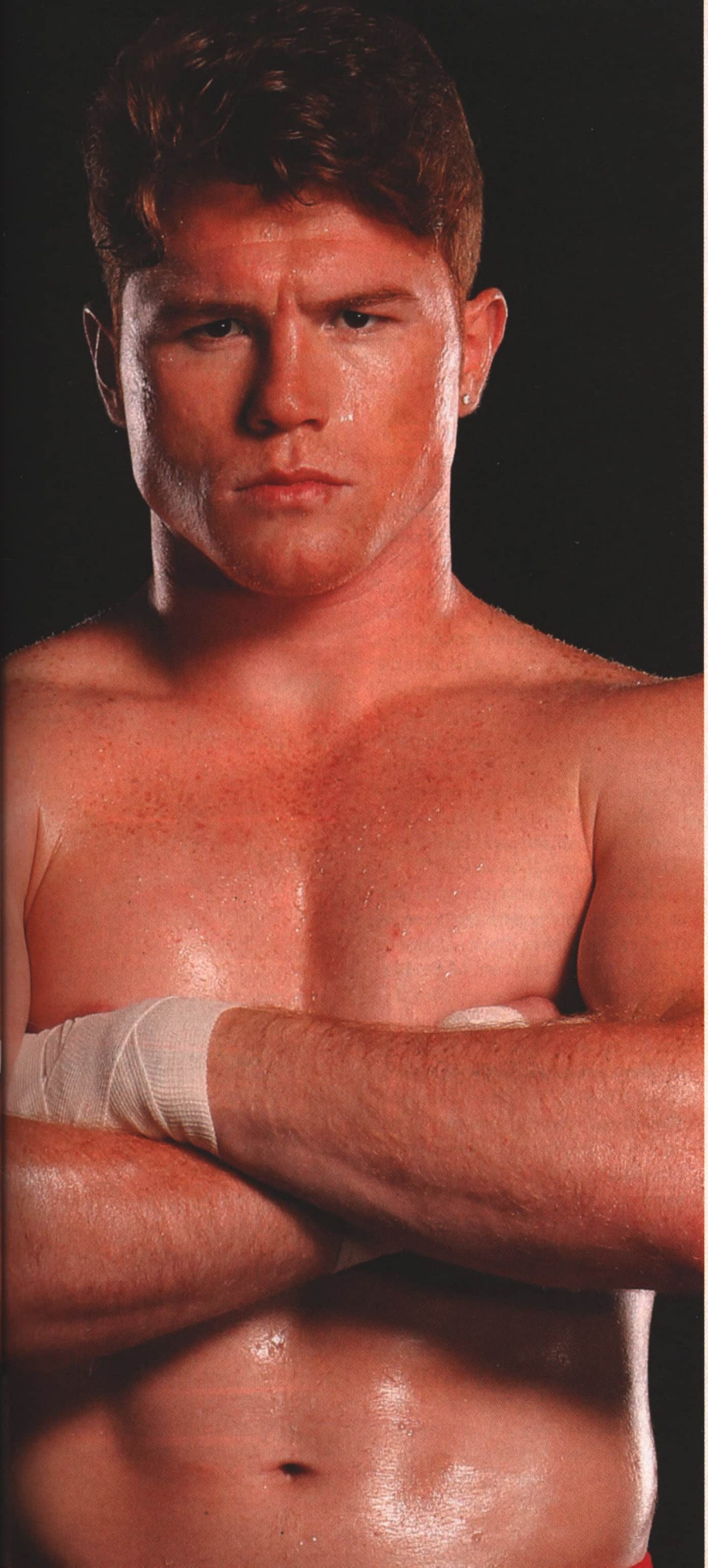


Canelo Alvarez vs. James Kirkland could be a home run.

ANOTHER KIND OF SPECTACLE

CANELO ALVAREZ-JAMES KIRKLAND CAN'T MATCH MAYWEATHER-PACQUIAO IN TERMS OF MAGNITUDE BUT IT SURE WILL BE FUN TO WATCH

By **Bart Barry**



A month before (and a day after) Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao announced they would fight one another, Golden Boy Promotions announced that Mexican junior middleweight Saul "Canelo" Alvarez would face southpaw James Kirkland. Though the original date and location migrated – from May 2 to May 9, four days after Cinco de Mayo, and from Las Vegas to Kirkland's native Texas – to accommodate Mayweather-Pacquiao, the important details did not change: Alvarez and Kirkland would make an inevitably violent spectacle on HBO, not pay-per-view.

Quickly a Texas press tour happened, with appearances by the fighters and their handlers at the fight venue, Houston's Minute Maid Park, colloquially known as "The Juice Box," and downtown San Antonio's Aztec Theater, the latter partly to acknowledge the city's extraordinary turnout for Alvarez's 2013 match with Austin Trout.

"As far as profile and caliber of event, this is as fine a fight as anything I've seen on the network since I started working at HBO," said Peter Nelson, HBO's vice president of programming.

Minute Maid Park, home of the Houston Astros, is an innovative fight venue with a retractable white roof. That's fortunate for those who might otherwise have to brave Houston's suffocating Gulf of Mexico humidity.

"Tickets start at $10," said promoter Oscar De La Hoya. "We were at that arena and the $10 seat is probably the best seat because of how the arena is built."

Alvarez belongs to De La Hoya's Golden Boy Promotions but the idea of booking innovative Texas fight venues belongs to Mike Battah, who, along with retired San Antonio prizefighter James Leija, runs Leija-Battah Promotions, the co-promoter for May 9. Alvarez-Kirkland was originally expected to take place at the Alamodome – on either date – but a May 9 graduation ceremony for The

University of Texas at San Antonio trumped boxing considerations and caused Battah to move the fight 200 miles east.

The Juice Box opened 15 years ago as Enron Field, bearing the name of a local energy-trading firm that, although defunct for 13 years, still remains a synonym for creative accounting practices and disgraceful corporate governance. Minute Maid Park features a flagpole on the field of play and an incline in center field, nicknamed the "Grassy Knoll" after an area of Dallas' Dealey Plaza, where President John F. Kennedy was shot. In a nod to the history of its location on the grounds of Houston's once-bustling Union Station, there is a railway motif in the stadium, complete with a replica train that choo-choos its way along a left-field wall whenever the home team does something grand.

It all forms the sort of odd spectacle that boxing, alone, regularly creates: a Mexican fighting a Texan in a baseball stadium known for a center-field feature referencing the assassination of an American president, built on a train station and bearing the logo of an orange-juice vendor, four days after a Mexican fiesta date.

Oh, about that date.

"I didn't feel anything bad at all," Alvarez said when asked whether the calendar adjustment bothered him. "We moved the date out of respect, out of intelligence, too, and also to preserve tradition."

Today, the spectacle of springtime superfights orbiting Cinco de Mayo weekend has a fated feel to it, as if sometime during the reign of the Maya there came a decree that it must be a Mexican who fights on the Saturday evening nearest that date. But such fatefulness is substantiated by no history, Mexican or otherwise.

In his 869-page masterpiece, "Mexico: Biography of Power," Mexican historian Enrique Krauze gives merely one sentence to the date on which the Mexicans defeated the French in battle:

"But the rout of General Lorencez's troops at Puebla – by the Mexicans under the command of General Ignacio Zaragoza on May 5, 1862 – could have dampened Maximilian's enthusiasm and there were some negative reactions in Europe."

The battle happened in a complicated war for financial independence from Europe, 40 years after Mexico won actual independence from Spain, so it isn't the most memorable military date on a historical calendar as tumultuous as Mexico's.

How insignificant was the Mexican victory in Puebla on May 5? France nevertheless installed an Austrian emperor, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian von Hapsburg, two years later, and French troops remained on Mexican soil nearly five years after the battle Cinco de Mayo commemorates.

"Both dates are very important for my country," Alvarez said of the fifth of May and the 16th of September, Mexican Independence Day. "Cinco de Mayo, of course, is for Puebla, where they had the great battle. And 'The 16th' is for all of Mexico."

That's the correct thing to say for Alvarez, the red-haired scion of ranchers from the Mexican state of Jalisco, 400 miles west of Puebla. For the most part, however, May 5 is more important to Americans in the Southwest as a party date than it is to Mexicans as a historic one. Julio Cesar Chavez, "El Gran Campeon Mexicano," fought but two times on Cinco de Mayo weekend in his 115-fight career. Even Mexican-American Oscar De La Hoya, the prizefighter who made it a coveted date, did not begin making regular Cinco de Mayo matches until he was 11 years and 37 fights into a 45-fight career.

Alvarez knows there is nothing particularly offensive about Floyd Mayweather, an American, or Manny Pacquiao, a Filipino, co-opting Cinco de Mayo weekend – a date Mayweather believes he won from De La Hoya in their 2007 match (the first

BIG IN TEXAS

The Canelo Alvarez-James Kirkland fight could draw 40,000 or more to Minute Maid Park in Houston, a testament to Alvarez's popularity in the Lone Star State. That figure would make it one of the biggest crowds to see a boxing match in the state. Here are some of the biggest Texas crowds:

59,995 Pernell Whitaker vs. Julio Cesar Chavez • 1993, Alamodome, San Antonio

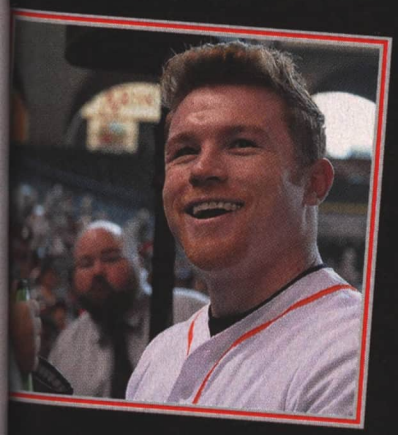
50,994 Manny Pacquiao vs. Joshua Clottey • 2010, Cowboys Stadium, Arlington

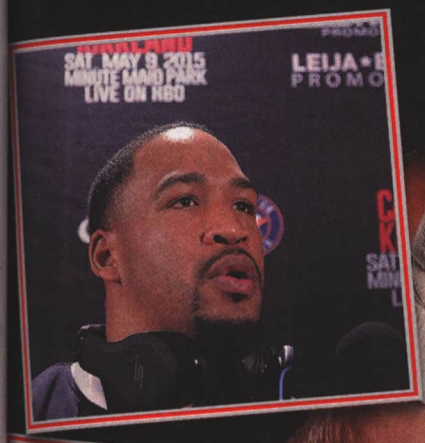
45,368 Oscar De La Hoya vs. Patrick Charpentier • 1998, Sun Bowl, El Paso

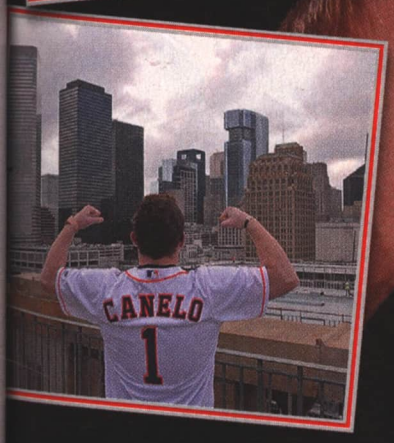
41,734 Pacquiao vs. Antonio Margarito • 2010, Cowboys Stadium

39,247 Canelo Alvarez vs. Austin Trout • 2013, Alamodome

37,321 Muhammad Ali vs. Ernie Terrell • 1967, Astrodome, Houston







Alvarez-Kirkland could draw 40,000 or more to Minute Maid Park in Houston.

Corona

Alvarez said the support he receives from Mexicans in the U.S. motivates him.

time in 11 years Mayweather fought on that date) – but Alvarez wants the truly meaningful date of Sept. 16, Mexico's actual Independence Day. And since he plans to fight twice annually, well, he might as well take both dates from Mayweather in a package conquest.

In Mayweather's attempts to fashion a "Cinco De Mayweather" boxing holiday, the undefeated American welterweight never has matched himself with a man of Mexican birth on the Saturday nearest May 5. He has fought, instead, Shane Mosley, an American, Miguel Cotto, a Puerto Rican, Robert Guerrero, an American, Marcos Maidana, an Argentine, and now Manny Pacquiao, a Filipino. One assumes Mayweather liked the idea of winning a Mexican fight date from De La Hoya. And when he saw how much it piqued De La Hoya, his fighter Alvarez and boxing fans of Mexican origin, as reliable a block of Mayweather consumers as any demographic, he decided to say the date was important to him.

Forget not: In an homage to his Uncle Roger, known as "The Mexican Assassian," Mayweather once wore a sequined sombrero to the ring – against De La Hoya.

Certainly, Alvarez expected to win both their match and any date even tangentially "Mexican" from Mayweather when they fought on Mexican Independence Day Weekend in 2013. But after losing most every round to Mayweather on any honest scorecard, Alvarez found his plans in tatters. Canelo has regrouped somewhat impressively since then and his Mexican fans, without a viable alternative, have shown truly impressive loyalty. Come this Sept. 16, it is unlikely any Mayweather fight that is not a rematch with Pacquiao will move Alvarez off the date.

Provided, of course, Alvarez beats James Kirkland, which is by no means so likely as Alvarez's post-Mayweather beatdown of a ruined Alfredo Angulo or July decisioning of a pacifistic Erislandy Lara. Whether Kirkland in fact marks an improvement in quality over Alvarez's last two opponents, he inarguably marks an increase in the peril Alvarez will face: Kirkland has 28 knockouts in 32 prizefights, where Angulo and Lara combined had only 30 knockouts in an aggregate 47 fights.

"May 9 we are going to have a very dangerous fight against a fighter who has a very heavy punch, one who, with one sole punch, is able to end a fight," said Alvarez's trainer, Eddie Reynoso. "Canelo is going to knock out the knockout artist."

'I'LL TELL YOU WHAT, IT'S GOING TO BE A MUCH BETTER FIGHT THAN THE FIGHT ON MAY 2.'
– JAMES LEIJA

"We're bringing a megafight to Texas," said Battah.

"You've got two powerful punchers that are going to go at it," said Leija. "Two fighters that don't take a backward step."

Kirkland, in fact, may be the first Alvarez opponent who matches, or even surpasses, Canelo in ferociousness.

What surprises most about Alvarez up close, what is more evident at ringside than on television, is the intensity of Alvarez's attack, the way he hurls himself at an opponent. That is Kirkland's way, too. But where Alvarez also features a relenting side, a willingness to disengage and skip about when fatigue sets in, Kirkland has only aggression in his arsenal.

Kirkland has no Plan B and that fortifies his commitment to Plan A.

"No, Alvarez is not going to make it a toe-to-toe fight," said Kirkland, when asked about fighter styles.

The only relenting thing about Kirkland is his chin. And it is likely Alvarez intends to counterpunch Kirkland early and see whether he can run the wild Texan into a right uppercut – the punch Alvarez throws better than most. Kirkland is vulnerable in the opening moments of a match and Alvarez is vulnerable at its close. Against Lara, Mayweather and Trout, Alvarez's tendency to tire after the sixth round was a decided liability. Against Kirkland, it is unlikely to be relevant.

Both men looked full, thick even, at their March press conferences in Texas. And as neither is known for being particularly fresh in championship rounds, in part because Kirkland has never visited them, it is rather unlikely May 9 will hear the bell ring to begin round 12.

"There are so many Mexicans in Houston and they receive me with such warmth," said Alvarez. "I feel at home. The support of the Mexican (immigrants) in the United States is incomparable. To have the respect and support of those people, the workers, the hardest workers, motivates me like nothing else."

While it is possible, likely even, May 2 will leave the world's overwrought and long-delayed expectations unfulfilled, it is impossible May 9 will bore. With tickets so affordably priced in Minute Maid Park, projections of 30,000-40,000 delighted fans cheering the inevitable savagery of Alvarez-Kirkland are reasonable.

"I'll tell you what, it's going to be a much better fight than the fight on May 2," said Leija. "I'll guarantee that."

Win or lose, if the fight becomes the wild spectacle many expect, it could ensure Mexican calendar dates belong to Canelo evermore.

NOT TOO LATE

JAMES KIRKLAND'S MOST FORMIDABLE FOE HAS BEEN JAMES KIRKLAND BUT HE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY ON MAY 9 TO GET IT RIGHT

By **Mark Whicker**

Ann Wolfe was sitting in her wilderness, 40 miles from Austin, Texas, with no one close enough to hear you swear or see you sweat. She was waiting for James Kirkland to decide whether he wanted to go through three months of hell. Eventually, he said no, although she never heard it from him.

Kirkland is challenging Canelo Alvarez on May 9 at Minute Maid Park in Houston before a crowd that will dwarf most of those generated by the Astros. It could be Kirkland's ticket to pay-per-view and an astonishing career rescue. Or it could be another setback that would confirm everyone's suspicion that Kirkland's most unbeatable foe is Kirkland.

Either way, this is one of the very few times when Kirkland will not leave anybody waiting.

Wolfe, a four-time boxing champion, has repeatedly brought out the best in Kirkland. Under her remorseless training, he has been

James Kirkland is given at least a puncher's chance to beat Canelo Alvarez on May 9.

one of the game's most concussive punchers. His sixth-round knockout of Alfredo Angulo in 2011 remains one of the most watchable fights of the decade.

Kirkland ordinarily would be in the Texas backwoods undergoing Wolfe's peculiar brand of torture. Instead he is in a San Antonio gym working with trainers Rob Morones and Gerald Tucker, and conditioning coach Bay Bay McClinton.

One headline from a website summed up the boxing world's reaction to this: "James Kirkland, Tired Of Winning, Drops Ann Wolfe."

Morones, who owns the gym, will be at the helm of a big fight for the first time. Same for Tucker. But for Kirkland, this is a BCS championship game, played at the Last Chance Saloon.

He is back from a third visit to prison, this time for gun possession. But his vaunted left hand remains. Canelo was hoping to fight Miguel Cotto this summer in a pay-per-view extravaganza. Those talks ended and Kirkland was standing right there.

Canelo is playing with fire, or at least lighter fluid. He has done that before. He became the first man to defeat Austin Trout and he escaped the indecipherable Erislandy Lara last July, winning a decision in the judges' eyes, if not the crowd's.

"James thinks this is a good fight for him," said Michael Miller, Kirkland's San Antonio-based lawyer. "He thinks that if he can get past the first four rounds, the fight is his."

Kirkland turned 30 in March and is 32-1, with 28 knockouts. The one loss came without Wolfe in the corner.

Nobuhiro Ishida had lost six times previously when Kirkland signed to fight him on the undercard of the Marcos Maidana-Erik Morales fight in 2011. Ishida floored Kirkland three times in the first round and that was it.

"This is Rick Morones' first chance at a big fight like this," Miller said. "He's been hanging out at gyms, putting the mitts on, getting in the ring with the fighters. I told him, 'Look, I'm not dogging you but if James doesn't have a good night, the onus is going to be on you. And if you pull it off, then you look like a genius.' That's just the way it is."

Miller is pleased with the presence of McClinton, who has worked with the San Antonio Spurs. "James has always needed a strong African-American male in his life and Bay Bay knows what he's doing," Miller said. "But he's taking a chance with the rest of it."

Kirkland considers these worries to be paternalistic, at best. He also seems extraordinarily happy.

"I'm eating things I never ate before," Kirkland said, referring to McClinton's nutrition program. "I'm feeling better than I ever felt. I just got through 10 tough rounds of sparring and I think I can go 10 more.

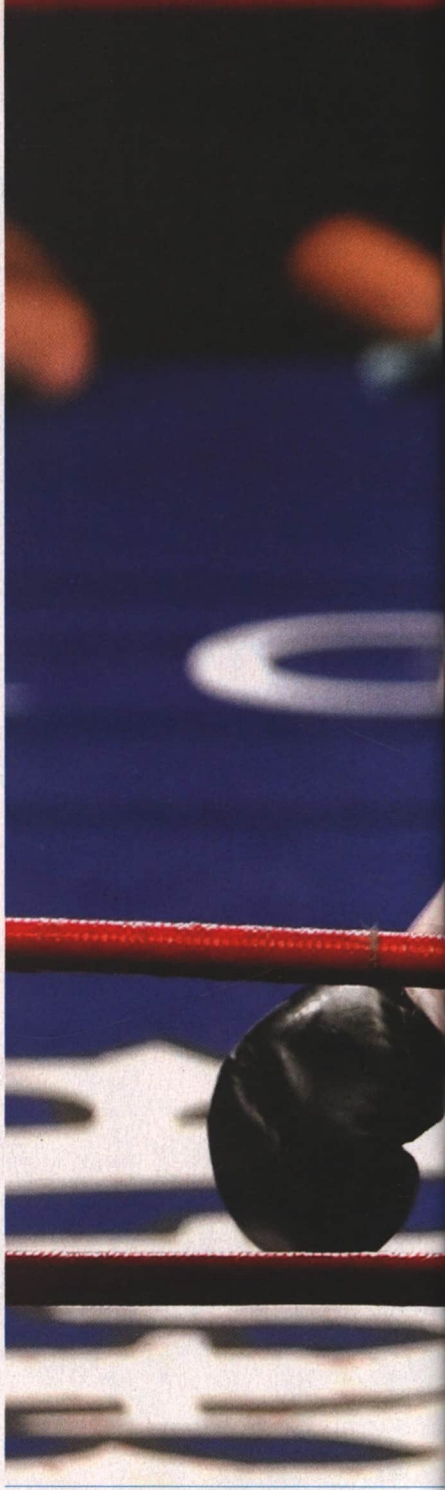
"I look at where I am today and I think it's destiny, man. All the things I've been through, all the tough decisions I've made, they have all led me to this moment. People can talk about what they think is best for me but I'm the one that has to go in the ring. I'm the one making these decisions, and I feel like I'm ready to take charge."

Kirkland looked fitter than Alvarez at their Houston and San Antonio press conferences. That is a significant step, considering that he, a junior middleweight, ballooned past the heavyweight minimum after his last fight. Kirkland also pointed out, repeatedly, that "Cinnamon Boy" didn't seem in fighting shape.

Whether Kirkland is in "Ann Wolfe shape" is another question. "If you're going to win, you're going to have to suffer," Wolfe said.

A training day with Wolfe lasted from sunup to sunset and was hardly confined to the ring she built by her house. On certain days Kirkland took a sling blade and cleared two acres of brush.

"There's no personal trainer, there's no nutritionist," she said. "There's just me, pushing you. There's no weightlifting. I'm from Louisiana.



No one questions Kirkland's ferocity, which makes him one of the most exciting fighters in the business.

I grew up watching guys eating beans and rice and working in the fields all day. They all had six-packs (abdominals). And whatever James does, I'm going to be there doing the same thing."

Kirkland fought six times in 2011,

the year he lost to Ishida. "Boxers these days are the biggest candy-asses," Wolfe said, "fighting twice a year."

But since Kirkland beat Angulo on Nov. 5, 2011, in Cancun, Mexico, he has fought only twice. The last sighting was a ruthless, six-round takeout of Glen Tapia in late 2013.

The margin between Wolfe's hinterland and the ring has always been the most dangerous ground for Kirkland. Part of the hiatus was due to Kirkland's lawsuit against Wolfe and his original trainer, Pops Billingsley, plus former manager Cameron Dunkin and Golden Boy Promotions.

He turned down an earlier chance to fight Canelo for reasons that seemed to change every week. Last fall he nixed a fight with Gabe Rosado because he was unhappy with promoter 50 Cent's cut of the purse.

"You can talk about what Mike wants or what everybody else wants for me," Kirkland said. "But I'm the one that controls the outcome. I know how hard I've worked and what I've been through. Canelo hasn't done that. Everything has been given to him."

It is hard to calculate how prominent Kirkland would be in boxing today had he taken the right advice and behaved himself. He might be a pay-per-view fixture. Maybe he would be preparing for Gennady Golovkin today in a middleweight

Home Run Derby.

But then it might be unfair to raise that issue. Kirkland didn't have the luxury of making a lot of decisions in his formative years. Options were few and unappealing. Wolfe and Miller will tell you that Kirkland's trip out of the wilds of East Austin was a miracle in itself.

Kirkland lost 30 months from his career when he was convicted of armed robbery in 2003. He then served a year for illegal firearm possession in 2009. And in 2013 he was jailed briefly for an assault involving a girlfriend, who became irate when Kirkland seemed preoccupied with another woman in a club. That woman happened to be the mother of one of his children.

That's why Kirkland is truly a power puncher. The power of that punch goes beyond any bodily harm. It arranges fights and TV appearances. Only someone with such a spectacular hook could keep getting repeat chances. Call it recidivism in reverse.

"The first time he went to jail, he was homeless," Miller said. "He robbed someone at a Dollar Store in Austin on Christmas Eve. He was trying to survive."

"People don't understand what the hood is like," Wolfe said. "A guy from the hood acts like somebody is always out to get him. Which, most of the time, is true."

Kirkland had served his probation when he was arrested on the gun charge, again in Austin. By then Wolfe had used Google to find "boxing lawyers" and had called Miller.

The three of them met at a pancake house in Austin and Kirkland tried to explain his life.

"I told myself I wasn't going to get close to him," Miller said. "But he grew on me. I was thinking that if I don't help this guy, who will?"

Kirkland will be without his rock – trainer Ann Wolfe – on May 9. Some believe that doesn't bode well for him.

Miller answered that question by helping him, a decision he has second-guessed ever since.

"It's like raising your kids," he said. "Sometimes you have to throw your hands up and let them figure it out on their own. I have no idea what he's thinking or who he's listening to. But I know he's a good person underneath all that."

Miller and Wolfe were asking Kirkland to live a counterintuitive life, to observe a sense of structure that had never existed in his world of poverty and occasional homelessness. The gun charge was a prime example.

"That was a tough one," Miller said. "He showed his ID at the gun show. He wasn't trying to break the law. If he had been, he would have gone to the black market. It was just a bad decision, a mistake he wouldn't have made if he had just called me. I would have told him a convicted felon can't do that, and that's what he still was.

"When someone makes a bad choice in a situation like that, you cut down on the stipend. But you don't give up on him."

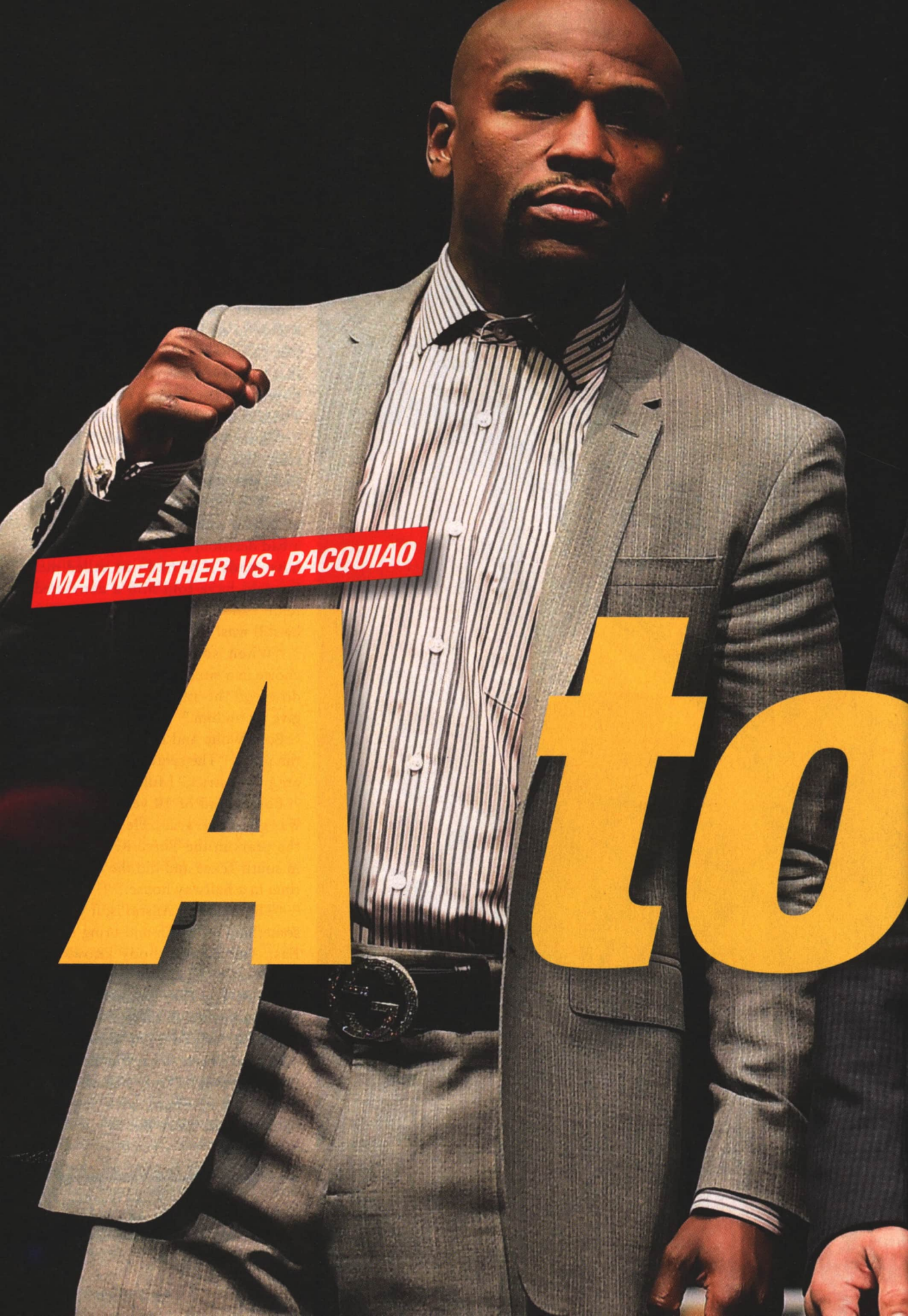
Both Wolfe and Miller appealed to the judge. "The sentencing guidelines are pretty strict," Miller said.

But instead of 10 years, Kirkland was given two years. He spent one of the years in the Three Rivers prison in south Texas and did the rest of his time in a halfway house.

"The way East Austin is, if you get something in Austin and bring it into East Austin, everybody knows it," Miller said. "I visited him often at Three Rivers. They wouldn't even let him shadowbox in there.

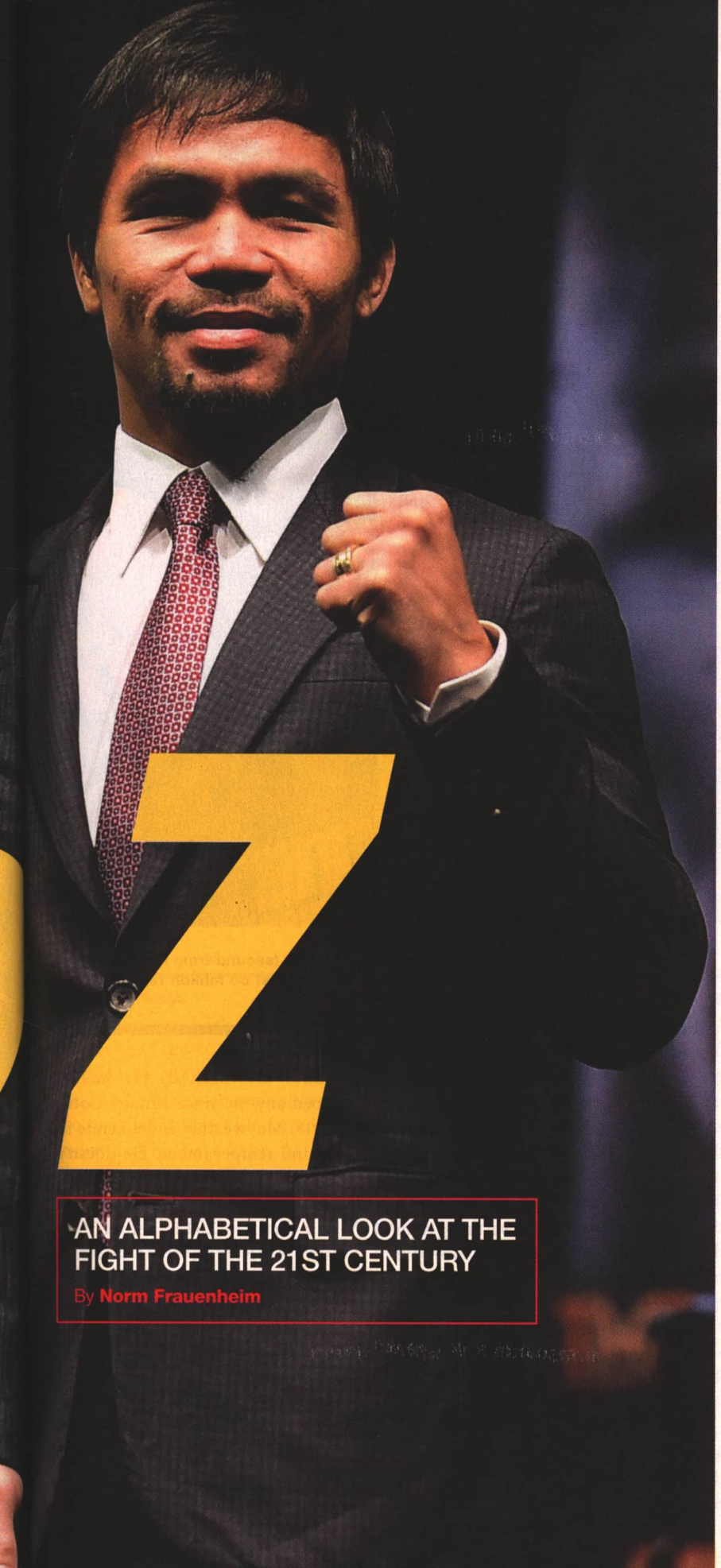
"We've talked a lot about what might have been. What if none of this had happened? I truly believe James would be up there with the best fighters in the sport. But he knows it's not too late."

The clock is ticking all the way down to May 9, when James Kirkland comes to a familiar crossroad. Throw the bomb ... or become one.



MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO

A to



Z

AN ALPHABETICAL LOOK AT THE FIGHT OF THE 21ST CENTURY

By **Norm Frauenheim**

There was a time when it looked as if Justin Bieber might get old, gray and maybe (or maybe not) become a grown-up before we'd ever see Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao fight. But the fight is happening, no matter what happens to Bieber. We're hoping we don't have to see him at all, of course.

Memo to Mayweather: Take Al Haymon's advice. Haymon eliminated the tired parade of flag-wavers, belt-carriers, wannabes and never-weres in his PBC debut on NBC. Getting rid of the traditional entourage would be one way of getting rid of Bieber. But that's another story, probably too much to ask for on a wish list full of expectations that are escalating faster than the price of a ringside seat.

We're just happy for the May 2 fight at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. Yeah-yeah-yeah, it's past its prime. And yeah-yeah-yeah, it might prove to be more of an event than a great fight. But big fights are a hyperventilated mix of drama and danger. They are always a circus, complete with bearded ladies, Biebers and clowns. At its best, it's theater, an irresistible spectacle.

Mayweather-Pacquiao is on a stage that boxing hasn't occupied in a while. Let the historians argue about whether it should be there. In the weeks after the curtain comes down, there will be time to judge whether it belongs alongside Ali-Frazier or in the spit bucket.

In terms of anticipation, however, Mayweather-Pacquiao is as big as it gets. From A to Z, here's an informal guide to what has happened, might happen and won't happen:

A for A-side and A-list.

The over-under on how many times Mayweather calls himself the A-side might make a pretty good

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao will meet again on May 2 in Las Vegas.

proposition bet. Bet on ad nauseam or more often than his counter lands. The A-list? You might be able to buy your way onto it, if you're willing to pay $100,000 for a seat on the floor at the Grand Garden Arena

B for business.
The fight is happening after on-and-off negotiations for more than five years because the market for it was always there. Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum likes to let big fights "marinate." We're not talking about teriyaki here. Arum argues that the longer the public talks about a fight, the more it will pay for it. Mayweather-Pacquiao has marinated longer than any ever has. Maybe that's why it'll do some record-setting business.

C for 'Caveat emptor.'
The Latin phrase for "Buyer beware" could've been a mantra for the ancient Romans. Their Colosseum still stands as a modern reminder of how unpredictable the fight game can be. There were great battles there. Probably some disappointing ones too, especially if you were a Christian. Point is, temper your expectations. Neither Mayweather nor Pacquiao is a young lion anymore.

D for demand.
There's been plenty. But we're not talking about tickets here. They're already gone, taken off the market by brokers and hedge funds. Will the escalating demand and inflationary spiral in prices temper demand as the opening bell approaches? Maybe. But don't count on it. If you plan on being in Vegas and don't have a hotel reservation, bring a sleeping bag.

E for expensive. Looking for a room? Call a loan officer before you book.

F for FINALLY.

G for gambling.
The fight is expected to generate a $50 million handle at Vegas' sports books. That's good but less than half of the $116 million bet on the last Super Bowl, won by New England over Seattle in February. Still, it'll be a very good day for Vegas' gambling industry. The Kentucky Derby will run for the roses a few hours before Mayweather and Pacquiao rumble for record revenue.

H for history.
Question is, what kind? It's safe to say the fight will make all kinds of financial history. Money is nice but it gets spent and squandered. Does anybody remember what Roberto Duran and Sugar Ray Leonard made in Montreal and then in New Orleans? Didn't think so. But we remember their first two fights. For a lasting place in history, Mayweather and Pacquiao will have to do more than collect paychecks.

I for income.
OK, it's impossible to ignore those paychecks. Let's be conservative. On second thought, conservative doesn't say it. Doesn't even get close. Mayweather's 60 percent is reported to be at least $100 million while Pacquiao will get the remaining 40 percent. Minimum wage adds up to major wealth, which has already led to some early shopping. Pacquiao bought a Beverly Hills pad once owned by Sean "Diddy" Combs. The price: $12.5 million, which leaves Pacquiao enough to finance a few political campaigns and pay some taxes.

J for judges.
They'll undergo more scrutiny than the panel seated in the Supreme Court, especially if the fight goes to the scorecards. The boxing business is enjoying more media attention than it has in years but it will regret that the fight ever happened if it ends with some huge controversy on the cards.

K for KO.
It's unlikely. Pacquiao's power appears diminished. He hasn't stopped anyone since Miguel Cotto in 2009. Mayweather is deliberate in style and temperament. He doesn't pursue KOs. He hasn't scored one since a controversial stoppage of Victor Ortiz in 2011. Before that, he stopped Ricky Hatton in 2007. Nevertheless, this fight could produce a surprise. After all, it's a surprise that it's even happening. Mayweather's feet and legs don't move like they used to. Early in camp, there were reports he knocked out a sparring partner. He's bigger than Pacquiao. Could he be working on a right hand that will do what Juan Manuel Marquez did in 2012?

Pacquiao (second from right) will have at least 60 million reasons to smile.

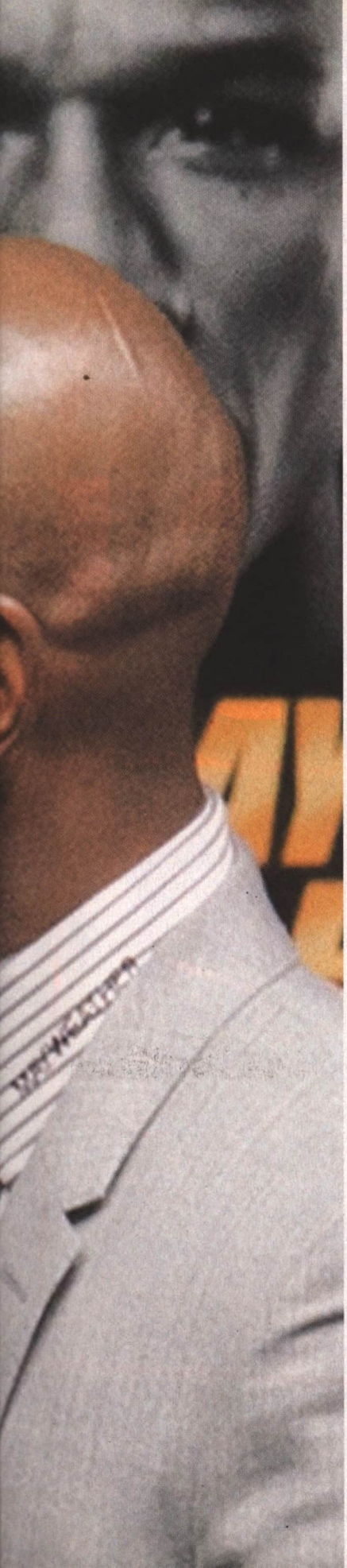
L for legacy.
Mostly, Mayweather's legacy. It's no secret that the "0" is almost as important to Mayweather as the money. At 47-0, he's on a mission to prove he is what that TBE acronym says he is: The Best Ever. A loss might say otherwise.

M for media.
You probably thought it would stand for Money. But that would have been cheap. Mayweather-Pacquiao figures to attract more media than any fight has in a long time. That means big headlines and major TV time. But it'll also lead to the tired and predictable. To wit: Expect a regurgitation of the boxing-must-be-abolished theme from a mainstream media that addresses concussions yet never argues that the NFL should be outlawed. Also, how many times will "Pacquiao" be misspelled? Any bets on the over-under on that one?

N for not again.
Talk of a rematch is inevitable. Record revenue would guarantee it. But negotiations were as lengthy and difficult as any in history. It's hard to believe that anybody would want to go through that again. Also, there might not be as much money in a sequel, especially if the May 2 fight fails to fulfill impossible expectations. Pacquiao has already hinted at retirement. Meanwhile, Mayweather would need only two more fights to go 50-0 before he could jump into a new Gulfstream and say goodbye to it all.

O for outrage.
A pay-per-view price of $100 for high def???? That's a lot of groceries, even a day's pay for some folks. It's also about twice as much as Pacquiao earned when he was hustling money to fight on the streets as a kid growing up in General Santos City. Yeah, this is a big money fight. The biggest ever. But boxing is still a people's sport, which means it should be affordable for the people who will still watch it after Mayweather-Pacquiao.

P for PPV.
Despite the prices, the record promises to fall. Mayweather's split decision over Oscar De La Hoya on May 5, 2007, at the MGM Grand set the mark with



Justin Bieber (left) is part of the Mayweather circus.

2.4 million buyers. The projection for Mayweather-Pacquiao is 3.15 million. You can even bet on it. Meanwhile, Arum, never afraid of exaggeration, has said it could be even more, putting the number between 4 million and 5 million. Whatever, it'll be a whole lot.

Q for questions.

No matter who wins, there will be many. Will Pacquiao retire and move on to a full-time political career? Will Mayweather fight only two more times or more? Will Amir Khan ever get a chance against either? Will Arum and Mayweather ever get along? Will Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach and Mayweather's dad, Floyd Sr., ever stop insulting each other? Nah, that last one is a dumb question.

R for right.

Mayweather's right hand, especially the counter, is his defining punch. In the end, big fights are won by what a fighter does best. Mayweather's chances hinge on how often that right lands.

S for sorry.

Let's hope nobody has to be. For boxing's future and the respective legacies of each fighter, there's no room for sorry.

T for testing, T for trouble.

It's no surprise that drug testing was the first controversy to erupt after the deal was done and celebrated at a polite news conference in Los Angeles. It was disclosed that Mayweather said no to a clause that would result in a $5 million fine for a positive PED test. It's hard to understand why Pacquiao asked for the fine at all. It's also hard to understand why Mayweather would even bother to say no. What's the point? A positive USADA test would probably cancel the fight anyway. But testing and PED allegations have been the biggest source of tension throughout a tortured path to a deal. When news broke that there'd be no fine, Mayweather adviser Leonard Ellerbe called Pacquiao adviser Michael Koncz "a moron." Too bad USADA doesn't also administer an IQ test and a polygraph.

U for unprecedented.

If Mayweather-Pacquiao meets some projections and generates $400 million in revenue, it will be the richest fight ever, which is monumental for the sport that has seen and done it all.

V for validity.

Mayweather-De La Hoya was called The Fight To Save Boxing. It didn't really need saving then. It doesn't really need saving now. But the attention on it sends a loud message to U.S. media that has been writing the sport's obit for years. Internationally, it is very much alive. Come to think of it, it's also alive in some American neighborhoods left for dead by their hometown media.

W for why.

Why oh why didn't this fight happen when each was in his prime?

X for X-factor.

By now, we've seemingly witnessed everything there is to see from each. The book on each is, well, eXhaustive. If one can come up with an unforeseen variable, however, the surprise might be hard to counter. It could be the difference.

Y for yeah.

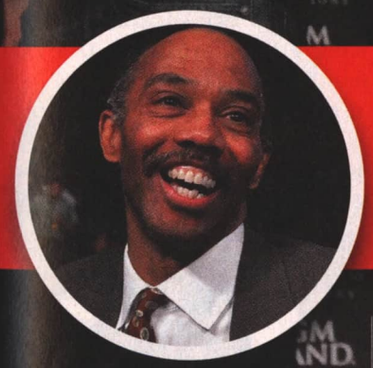
Yeah, it's here. And, yeah, it matters. What happens in Mayweather-Pacquiao will influence the sport for years. Yeah, that's the only sure bet.

Z for zero, zip.

Which tells you how often you'll see Al Haymon talking at news conferences or quoted on websites and in newspaper stories. But, by now, it's all been said anyway.

Premier Boxing Champions made a splashy debut March 7 on NBC.

REVOLUTION



AL HAYMON, THROUGH HIS NEW COMPANY PREMIER BOXING CHAMPIONS, HAS TURNED BOXING UPSIDE DOWN IN AN ATTEMPT TO BRING IT BACK TO THE MASSES

By **Ron Borges**

If Al Haymon gets his wish, his newest creation, Premier Boxing Champions, will be ubiquitous but he will not be. Haymon's plan to bring boxing back into the public's consciousness at the level it once occupied will demand of the nearly 200 fighters under his control something he would never desire for himself: full contact exposure.

The definition of ubiquitous could easily be the definition of Haymon's hopes for PBC: "existing or being everywhere at the same time." He, on the other hand, desires nothing more than to be seen nowhere at any time and pretty much would like the same to be true for anyone involved in the corporate end of what is a $200 million gamble on the future of boxing on network television.

Boxing's most powerful figure has done what no one before him would try. Not Bob Arum, not Don King, for 30 years boxing's most powerful promoters. Not HBO or Showtime, the premium cable rivals who have for decades held the sport's purse strings. Not anyone until Haymon put together an investment group willing to buy time on NBC, CBS, ABC and ESPN to air boxing nationally and in prime time in an attempt to reach a far wider audience than any premium cable operation could.

But Haymon didn't stop there. He also made deals with Spike and Bounce, the latter a cable network focused on the African-American community, to run

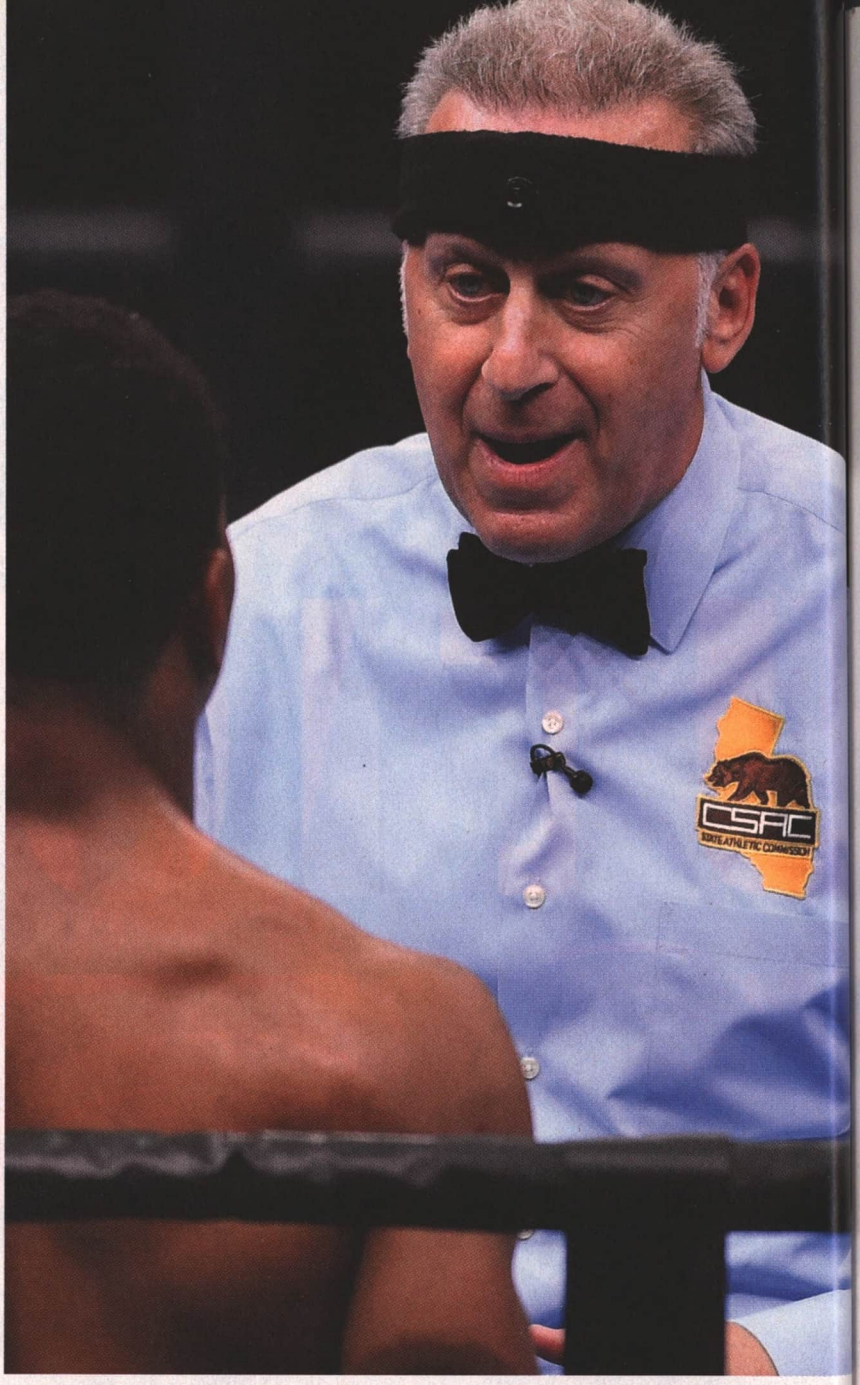
monthly showcases for his fighters. Combined with regular appearances on NBC prime time, CBS on Saturday afternoons, monthly ESPN shows beginning on July 11 and at least one on Saturday afternoons on ABC, plus the usual spate of higher-profile matches on premium cable and pay-per-view, boxing is poised to be seen by more American eyeballs over the next two years than in decades.

Haymon's multi-year deal with NBC includes five prime-time events and six matinees this year on free TV as well as nine more on NBC's cable sports network at a cost of over $20 million to Haymon and his investors. CBS, which also controls Showtime, signed a similar multi-year deal with Haymon beginning with an April 4 Saturday afternoon fight featuring WBC light heavyweight champion Adonis Stevenson defending his title against former super middleweight titleholder Sakio Bika. That show was to be sandwiched between two Showtime events featuring hot Haymon prospects Gary Russell Jr. and Jermell Charlo on March 28 and one of Mexico's most popular fighters, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., against Andrzej Fonfara on April 18.

ESPN2's 17-year-old "Friday Night Fights" series will end in May, replaced by higher quality once-a-month shows on ESPN, both on Saturday night prime time and in some cases on weeknights. These are promised to be of similar quality to "HBO Championship Boxing" and Showtime shows even though they'll be televised on basic cable. And reportedly Haymon has options for six more dates, options ESPN was happy to give him since he is buying the time but leaving editorial control of the broadcast and the broadcasters as well as re-broadcast rights to the network. Even the preliminary fights on those cards will be available on streaming video on ESPN3.com.

Each of those events will not only promote itself but each other and the larger PBC business model, which is focused on two things: returning televised boxing to the masses and regaining the kind of viewership that can increase advertising and hence make money. To aid in creating enough time and revenue for that growth, Haymon also signed a deal with BoxNation, a British subscription network, to carry the first three of his fight cards in the U.K., a relationship Haymon surely hopes to expand. He might tell you that if he would speak publicly about anything, which he steadfastly will not.

Much of the model Haymon is following is one used by his greatest rival in combat sports, UFC's mixed martial arts. UFC's rise, and its growing popularity with a much younger viewing demographic (boxing's viewers skew 40 and older at a time when the 18-34 demographic rules), has long been seen as a threat to boxing's long-term health. Many have already decided that UFC has won the day but one of its creators, Dana White, believes



One PBC innovation during its March 13 show: A headband cam on referee Jack Reiss.

Haymon may be on to something.

"Haymon admits that's what he did," said White, UFC's president. "He's trying to take the UFC model and implement it in boxing. I give him all the credit in the world. The guy went out and did what nobody else was willing to do. He raised money to get boxing back on free TV.

"To run something like they're running takes a lot of infrastructure and there's a ton of overhead. I don't see how they can survive without a pay-per-view model, too. You can't just go out there and blow your mind financially. The long-term goal is to make money."

To do that, UFC made a prime-time deal with FOX, as well as ones with small cable outfits, but also ran its own pay-per-view operation, which is where the bulk of its money is made. For Haymon to do that, he'd have to outbid HBO and Showtime or convince his fighters to gamble on themselves and fight independently. His signature fighter, Floyd Mayweather Jr., certainly went in the opposite direction for his long-awaited May 2 showdown with Manny Pacquiao, and understandably so. Both Showtime, with whom Mayweather has an exclusive contract, and HBO, which has a similar deal with Pacquiao, will be controlling a pay-per-view extravaganza expected to shatter every record for televised and live-gate sales of a boxing event, likely exceeding $300 million in revenue.

That is natural because PBC is in its infancy. But long-term, White insisted, Haymon and his fighters will probably have to confront the need to turn their backs on premium cable guarantees and roll the dice if boxing's return to prime time is to become the spawning ground for future stars that it was until the late 1980s, when both NBC and CBS abandoned the sport.

"Haymon is a smart guy," White continued. "He's well respected for what he did in the music business and in boxing. You can't raise $200 million if you're not. Guys like Arum and King put on some great fights but they are not forward thinkers. They haven't done anything to help the sport. Boxing is better off today with Haymon.

"A lot of people will say a lot of negative things about what he's doing and the way he's doing it. A lot of people out there will talk but he's the guy in the trenches. A lot of people did the same thing to us but we did it. Why would you hate on him for trying? Arum is out there saying this will ruin the business. It might ruin *his* business."

The naysayers insist Haymon's spending level cannot be sustained and caution that no one will continue to pay for fights if they can see so many on free television. They also fear HBO and Showtime might choose to get out of the business rather than compete for viewers with free TV and ESPN on basic cable, but that is typically negative speculation from boxing's business side.

Haymon has long been criticized for being too protective of his fighters, limiting their exposure to tough matches and creating illusions rather than top-flight boxers, but his new venture would seem to demand tough fights be made. Having seven of the top 10 welterweights in the world, for example, cries out that they face each other for money to be made and to spur viewer loyalty.

This leads to another issue that has plagued the sport: Will PBC do business with non-Haymon fighters, especially highly rated ones like middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin and unified light heavyweight titleholder Sergey Kovalev? If not, the sport's biggest weakness – fractured titles and too many unknown "champions" – will continue to drag boxing down.

UFC does not have this problem because it owns the belts and the bulk of the talent. It will never be quite that simple for Haymon because of the multitude of sanctioning bodies (WBA, WBC and IBF, known to some as "Los Tres Banditos," as well as the WBO and lesser organizations) and number of skilled non-PBC fighters worldwide.

Ad sales could also be daunting, not because of the size of the audience but its demographic and the natural uncertainty of the sport. In football there are at least four quarters and you know well ahead of time which teams are involved. Baseball, basketball and hockey play to similar rhythms. In golf, no one gets knocked out on the par-4 fourth hole to end the drama. Advertisers, like audiences, like certainty, but in boxing, quick knockouts and last-minute injuries can change the entire nature of an event, irking advertisers who thought they placed ads in the main event only to see one guy on his back before anyone sees their product.

So certainly there are risks, although they are lessened by the fact that PBC is buying the time and thus not faced with the short-term demands of a broadcast network's bottom line. Even so, the ratings for the first prime-time shows on NBC and Spike were encouraging, especially those for an action-packed main event between WBA welterweight champion Keith Thurman and former three-division world titleholder Robert Guerrero.

The overnight ratings for the debut did a healthy 2.53/5 rating and was the highest-rated sporting event on television between 8:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. That number increased every half hour before peaking at 3.01 for the final six rounds of Guerrero-Thurman. Overall, 3.4 million viewers tuned in at some point, which would have eclipsed any boxing pay-per-view show in history by a million viewers.

That 2.53 nearly tripled NBC's average for Saturday afternoon fights that ran intermittently between 2012-14 and nearly tripled its last prime time NHL game, which did a rating of less than one for a game between the New York Rangers and Philadelphia Flyers, which was the first indoor, regular-season prime-time broadcast of an NHL game in 41 years.

It was also the most watched boxing telecast in prime time since a show called "Oscar's Night at the Fights" – hosted by Oscar De La Hoya and including a young Floyd Mayweather Jr. – drew 5.9 million viewers (4.29

PBC received rave reviews for its fighter introductions – including that of John Molina – on March 7.

rating) on Fox on March 23, 1998. PBC viewership peaked in the final half hour at 4.2 million viewers, according to Nielsen ratings. That indicates word of mouth and word via social media drove people to the show after a 30-year prime-time absence for boxing on NBC (Larry Holmes vs. Carl "The Truth" Williams on May 20, 1985). PBC's performance also led NBC to a Saturday prime-time victory among adults 18-49, with a 1.08 rating overall in that demographic.

In addition, 576,435 minutes of PBC on NBC coverage were live-streamed via NBC Sports Live Extra to desktops, tablets and mobile devices – ranking as the third-best Saturday night this year behind the NFL Wild Card playoffs (Jan. 3, 2015) and the NHL Stadium Series game on Feb. 21, 2015). On social media #NBCBoxing trended on Twitter worldwide throughout the telecast, along with #PBConNBC, the boxers' names and other key terms trending on the national level, all signs that the event was reaching the younger audience it sought.

More than a million viewers watched Andre Berto knock out

Josesito Lopez on Spike's first show, with the entire telecast averaging 869,000 viewers. That may not sound like much but it was the most watched boxing event on Friday night in eight years and more than doubled ESPN2's "Friday Night Fights'" average viewership (403,000).

Then again, this opening salvo pales in comparison to what boxing on free TV once meant. In the 1970s to the mid-1980s, it was a regular event in prime time and on Saturday afternoons, with many young males planning their day around fights that created legends like Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier, Holmes, George Foreman and the "Four Kings" (Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, Tommy Hearns and Roberto Duran).

"This is like a major audition and the fans will be the judge," said Leonard, who worked as NBC's ring analyst on a legend-studded broadcast team that also included Al Michaels ("Do You Believe in Miracles?!") and Marv Albert but was one White felt needed more youthful voices. "These boxers have what it takes to become superstars but boxing needs this. It's long overdue. Network television exposure is how we made our names."

By "we" Leonard was talking not only about himself, Hagler, Hearns and Duran, but so many others of the 1970s-1990s, including Mike Tyson. While some would have become stars regardless, many others became household names primarily because their fights were regularly in people's households. One such fighter was Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, a moderately talented guy with good looks, the gift of gab and a warrior's heart who will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June.

Leonard believes a fighter like Mancini would have a hard time today becoming the kind of national phenomenon he was in the 1980s, when he inspired singer-songwriter Warren Zevon to write this classic line:

"Hurry home early ... hurry on home ... Boom Boom Mancini's fighting Bobby Chacon."

That's how it was back then. People would hurry on home to watch Mancini fight Chacon ... or Aaron Pryor fight Alexis Arguello ... or Ali fight anybody ... or the relentless Hagler and the heavy-handed Hearns mix it up ... but also watch guys like Azumah Nelson, Jeff Fenech, Iran Barkley and many others who would be struggling to make a name and a living in today's premium cable-fueled world of televised boxing.

"One of the reasons Ray Leonard became an American icon was because [people] could see him," Michaels said. "Turn on Channel 7, Channel 4, whatever it was in those years. Obviously, it's in a different place right now but if boxing is going to be resurrected, this is one giant step for doing that."

Resurrections, of course, are relative. Will boxing ever return to its glory days of the 1950s? One doubts it but then that begs a larger question: Would Ed Sullivan or "I Love Lucy" be a nationally shared obsession today?

Back in the 1950s NBC's "Gillette Cavalcade of Sports" brought the Friday night fights into living rooms across America. That was where impressionable kids sat with their fathers and uncles watching not only Sugar Ray Robinson, Rocky Marciano or Willie Pep but also guys like Henry Hank, Emile Griffith and Dick Tiger, and they fell in love. Those black-and-white images remain engraved in the minds of many gray-haired loyalists of the fight game, having been planted there when they were kids.

Boxing did as high as a 24.8 share then, meaning nearly 25 percent of all televisions in America were tuned in to "Friday Night Fights," which was one of several weekly boxing telecasts in the 1950s and '60s. Carlo Rotella, director of American Studies at Boston College and a social commentator and fight fan, wrote nostalgically recently on the op-ed page of the Boston Globe of those days and what PBC's NBC telecast said to him beyond the sport itself.

"I think the nostalgia that suffused [NBC's] telecast was not just for a time when boxing was a mainstream sport but for the very idea of a mainstream, exemplified by the quaint notion of an event on network TV on Saturday night everybody would talk about on Monday morning," Rotella wrote. "This first evening of NBC's boxing experiment was considered a success because it gained an audience share of a mere 5, enough to win its time period ... in several categories of adult viewers. In our media environment of endless choices to match every individual consumer profile, the concept of the mainstream has lost much of its currency and authority. Almost everything, with the possible exception of the Super Bowl and fear of terrorism, qualifies as a niche enthusiasm these days."

Haymon's shared vision for boxing with NBC, CBS and ESPN is, one would assume, a tad less ambitious than that. Rather it is to bring back into the fold some of the casual sports fans who once watched boxing as regularly as football, baseball and the rest. For the networks, it's a minimal risk because Saturday programming is TV's great wasteland and they're being paid for their time. So if boxing can increase viewership even marginally it's a low-cost win for the networks and possibly for the sport.

As Michaels explained, "What you really want to do is make sure the audience is able to connect in some manner with the fighters and tell the audience who they are, what they're all about, and why they should care about them."

NBC and Haymon went to considerable time, expense and advertising to begin that process and it is ongoing. They used 17 television trucks at that first broadcast and an assortment of different production ideas, including a 360-degree view they called "The Round-A-Bout." White said UFC uses only seven and theorized that kind of expense can't go on forever.

At some point, the sport will have to stand on its own, bolstered by increasing audiences, advertisers, competitive matches and the kind of spontaneous thing that happened late in the Thurman-Guerrero fight.

As they battled, each standing in front of the other in the final rounds exchanging harsh blows, the entire crowd of more than 10,000 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena stood several times as one, applauding as if it had just witnessed Springsteen or Bocelli in concert for the first time.

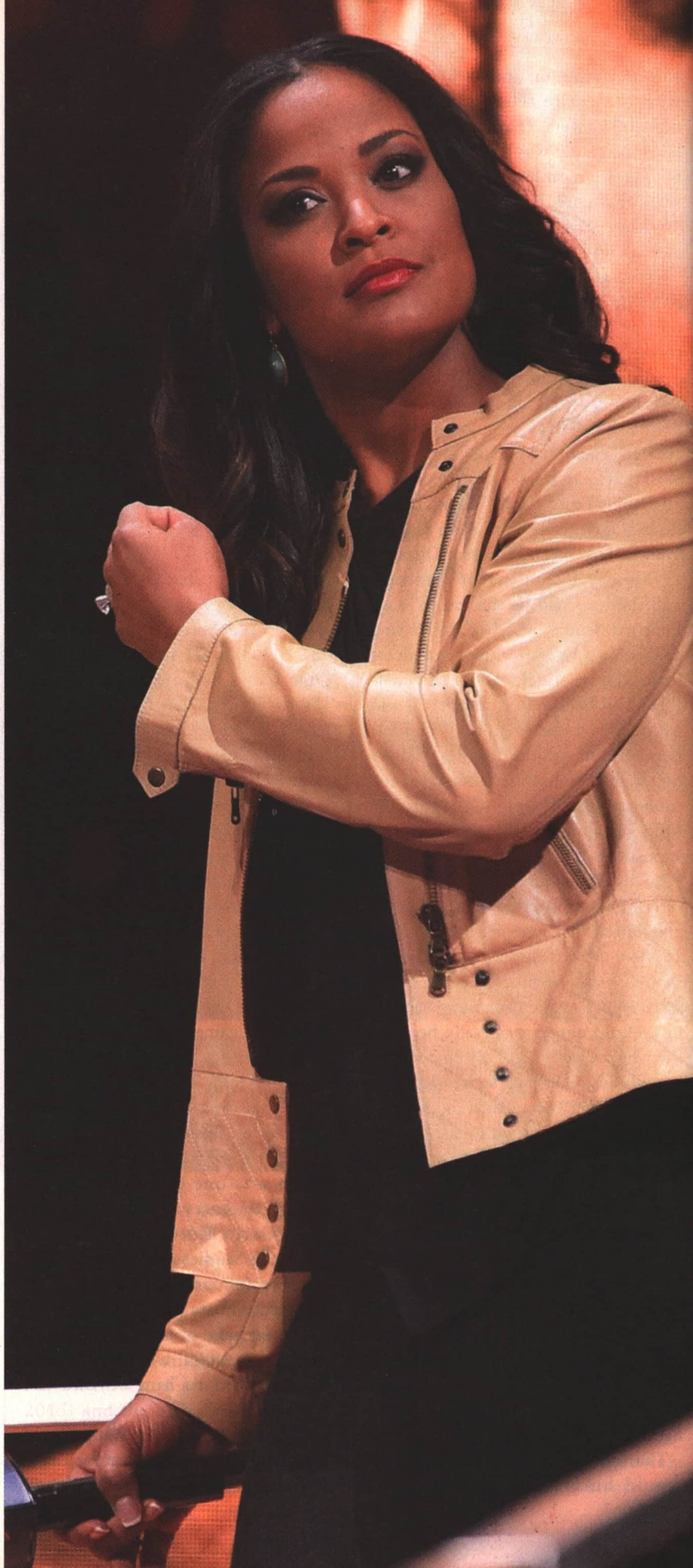
Savage artists at work, Thurman and Guerrero's willingness to suffer for their art saved the show and surely pleased television viewers who hadn't seen a boxing match in years. As those folks texted and tweeted about what they were witnessing, the television audience grew every half hour to reach that 4 million mark by the end. Guerrero was losing badly on the scorecards by that point but by fighting furiously he reminded us that sometimes a man can win not by having his hand raised but simply by refusing to give in to defeat.

"Keith Thurman won the fight, Robert Guerrero won the fans," Albert said near the conclusion of the broadcast. Guerrero had won over the fans, who had begun wildly chanting his name when he got off the floor after Thurman drove him onto his back with a sharp right hand to the temple late in Round 9 and simply refused to accept the obvious. He was beaten but he did not lose.

"I'm a fighter," Guerrero said. "I always come through and keep fighting my heart out and that's why the fans love me. I came to fight. I know I didn't win the fight but I won the hearts of America."

More fights like that and boxing on prime time may do the same.

"This is a tremendous opportunity the sport needs," said former HBO Sports executive and boxing promoter Lou DiBella. "It's throwing boxing in front of more eyeballs than in a generation. Boxing was becoming more and more marginalized. Somebody had to take a chance. Al was the one willing and able to do it. The others who were willing weren't



Laila Ali brought some broadcasting star-power as an interviewer on NBC.

THE TV LINEUP PBC SHOWS CAN BE SEEN ON A MULTITUDE OF NETWORKS

★ Al Haymon may be incognito but the boxing revolution he has created is not.

Premier Boxing Champions is set to be seen everywhere. Prime time. Saturday afternoons. Basic cable. Premium cable. Network television. Streaming video. Newspapers ads. Radio and TV ads. Over the next two years it will be easier to avoid the flu than televised boxing in America.

Haymon has primarily done this by purchasing time and swallowing at least some of the production costs on every available medium except HBO's premium cable, which remains at war with him. The only missing piece to date is a decision by PBC to produce its own pay-per-view shows.

That hasn't happened but seems likely to only be a matter of time if Haymon's present plan bears fruit by lifting both boxing's viewership and skewing younger its fans' demographic. Haymon basically is gambling an estimated $200 million of his and his investors' money in the belief that all boxing needs is wider availability to television viewers to return to the position it once held on the American sports scene.

HERE IS A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF THE DEALS HE'S MADE.

NBC ★ Five prime-time events and six matinees a year for the next two years on free TV at a cost of more than $20 million a year, as well as nine more shows on NBC's sports cable channel.

CBS SHOWTIME ★ Multi-year deal beginning with PBC's April 4 show on a Saturday afternoon that featured RING and WBC light heavyweight champion Adonis Stevenson vs. former super middleweight titleholder Sakio Bika, sandwiched between two shows on Showtime March 28 and April 18, the latter featuring Mexican idol Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Andrzej Fonfara. CBS will do at least eight Saturday afternoon PBC fight cards a year.

ESPN ★ ESPN will replace its 17-year-old "Friday Night Fights" show on ESPN2 with a two-hour, higher-profile monthly card on its main channel beginning July 11 in prime time. Although the shows will primarily be on Saturday nights, some will be on weeknights because of schedule conflicts with college football. At least one show, and possibly more, will be a Saturday afternoon card on ABC. These will reportedly be "HBO Championship Boxing"-quality shows, meaning big names one notch below pay-per-view status. The preliminary fights on those cards will be available as streaming video on ESPN3.com.

SPIKE ★ Multi-year deal to televise monthly shows on Friday nights. The first featured former welterweight champion Andre Berto vs. Josesito Lopez and did 1 million viewers at its peak.

bounce ★ This is a cable network partially created by Haymon that is focused on the African-American community. It will do a monthly show featuring prospects and rising contenders beginning in July.

BOX NATION ★ Haymon also signed an agreement with the British subscription network to carry the first three of his fight cards in the U.K., a relationship Haymon surely hopes to expand.

Of the four major networks, that leaves only Fox out of the mix and even that may be a wise choice. That was for many years the NFL's model, always leaving one broadcast entity without pro football to create competition and a bidding war when the next round of negotiations began.

If Al Haymon can pull that off, he may not have saved boxing but he will surely have resurrected it with a much needed new business model.

able and the ones who were able weren't willing.

"I've had a 15-year relationship with Al. I think he's trying to turn the sport around. He sees an opportunity. He has a vision and he went ahead and did it. He was willing to go out and take a risk. What did King or Arum ever re-invest? Haymon is doing what they didn't want to do. They just promoted a show, a fighter. They put on some great events and made a lot of money but how do you develop new fans at $75 on pay-per-view with the main event at midnight (ET)?

"Now if you like a kid you can follow him on NBC or CBS. If he gets to pay-per-view, you'll follow him there too. Greg Haugen was never a great fighter but he was a great TV fighter. People wanted to see him. That's what boxing needs. It needs the sports fans, not just the boxing nerd who watches every fight on streaming video from Kazakhstan. Al is making boxing more accessible. You don't have to pay $75 or even have premium cable to watch with your 14-year-old. What's wrong with that?"

Al Haymon hopes nothing. Or at least we think that's what he hopes because he's not saying. He's in the back room somewhere, talking on an aged flip phone, never sending a text or using email, commenting on nothing. He is leading a quiet revolution, promoting boxing without the bombast.

But for guys like Thurman, Al Haymon is not The Quiet Man. He's The Savior.

"At its essence boxing is a star sport," said TV analyst and former RING Magazine editor Steve Farhood. "In recent years it hasn't done a good job of creating that. The number of potential stars in boxing will never decrease but they need to get out and be seen. They haven't been recently.

"The product has never changed. Times have changed. A good fight is still great entertainment. That has never changed. The product is good but you have to get the product to the consumer. Are the tools in place to make those potential stars shine? This might be the tool."

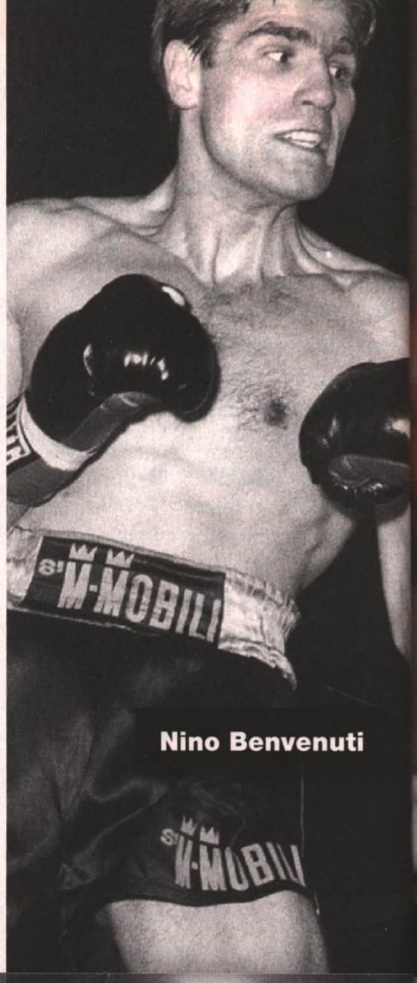
For that to happen somebody has to find the product first. For the moment at least that won't be hard to do. Unlike Al Haymon – but because of him – boxing can now be seen everywhere. RING

SPECIAL FEATURE

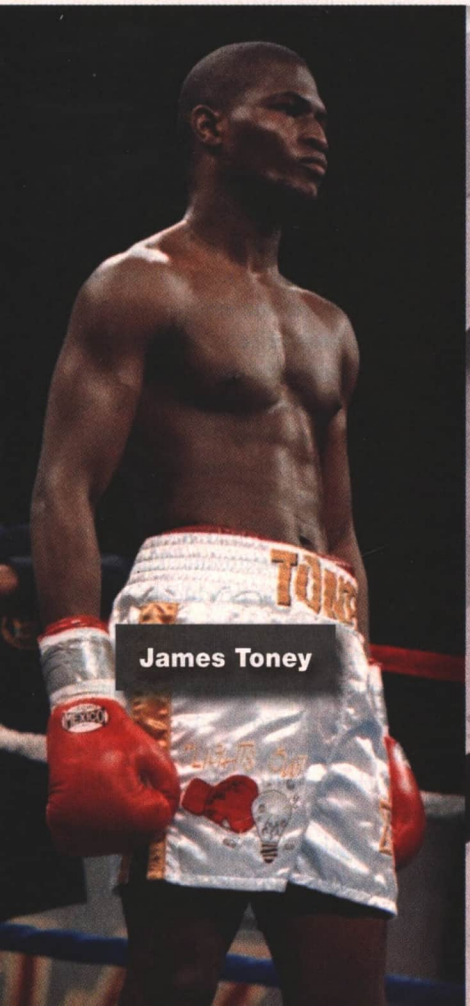
THE GREATEST MODERN MIDDLEWEIGHT?

SUGAR RAY ROBINSON COMES OUT ON TOP AMONG NINE GREAT 160-POUNDERS IN A POLL OF 24 EXPERTS, REPEATING HIS PERFORMANCE AMONG WELTERWEIGHTS IN A SIMILAR TOURNAMENT-STYLE COMPETITION.

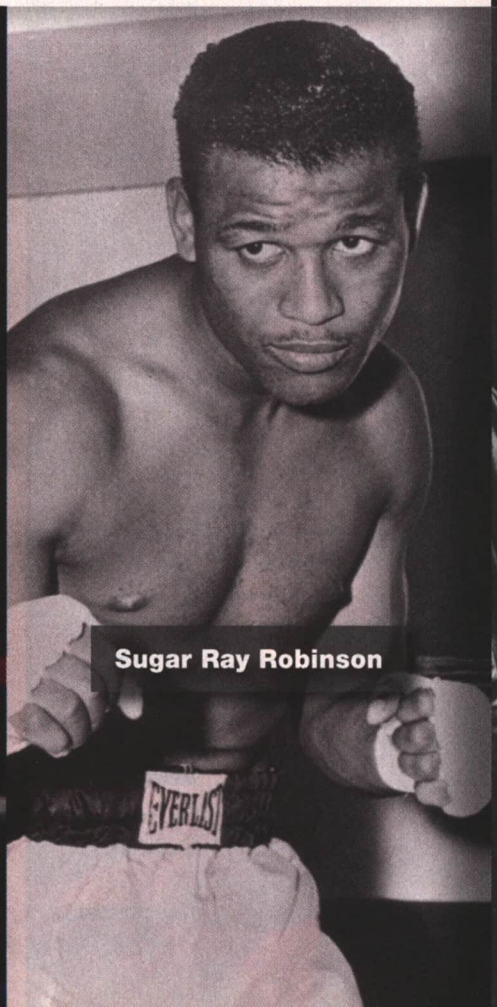
By **Thomas Hauser**



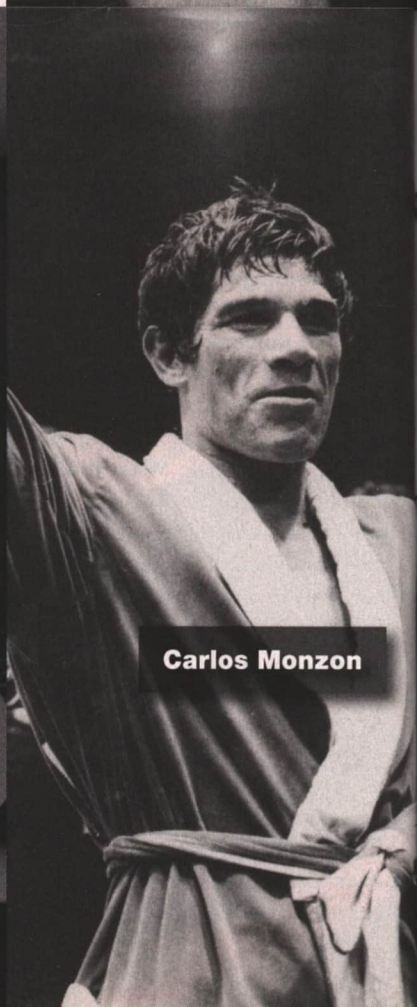
Nino Benvenuti



James Toney

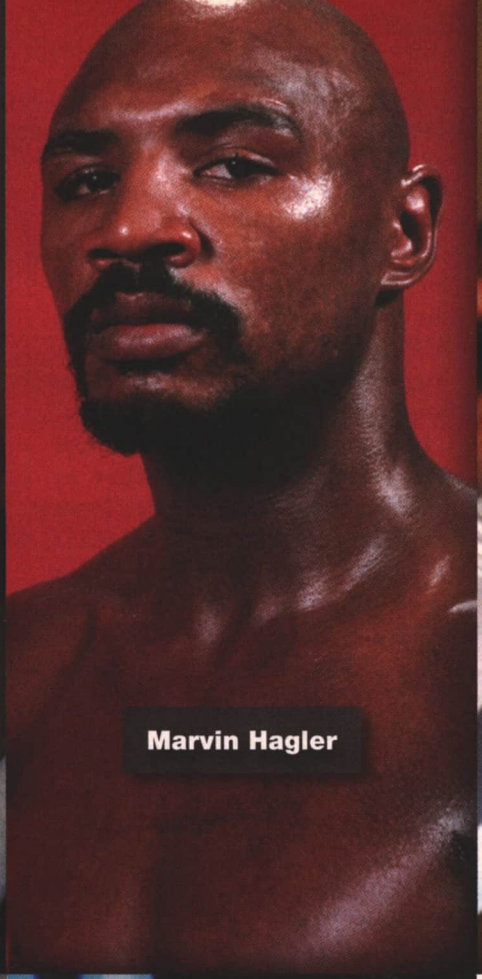


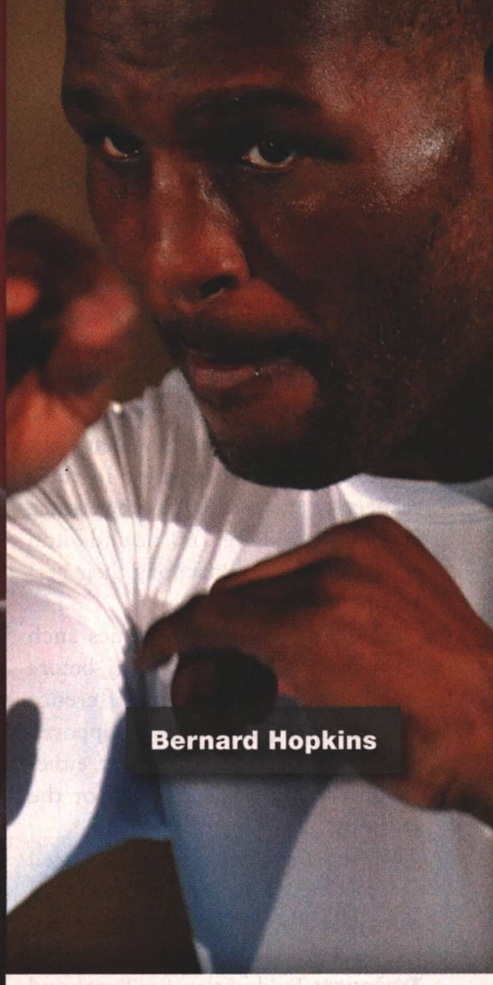
Sugar Ray Robinson

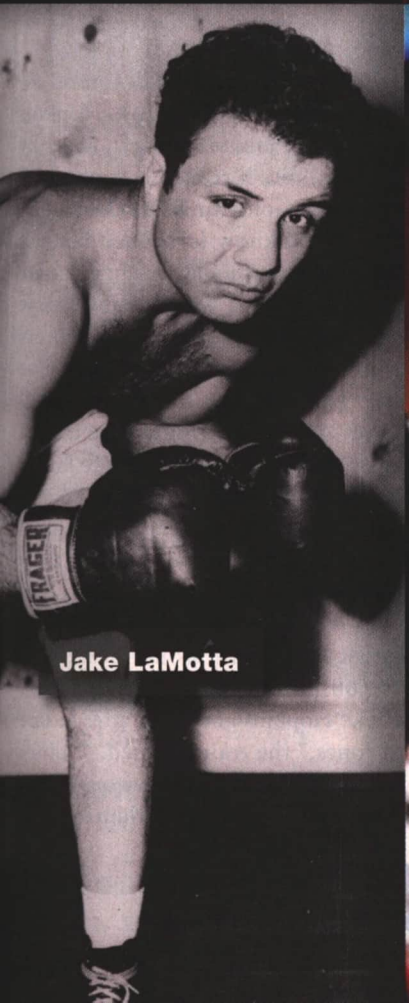


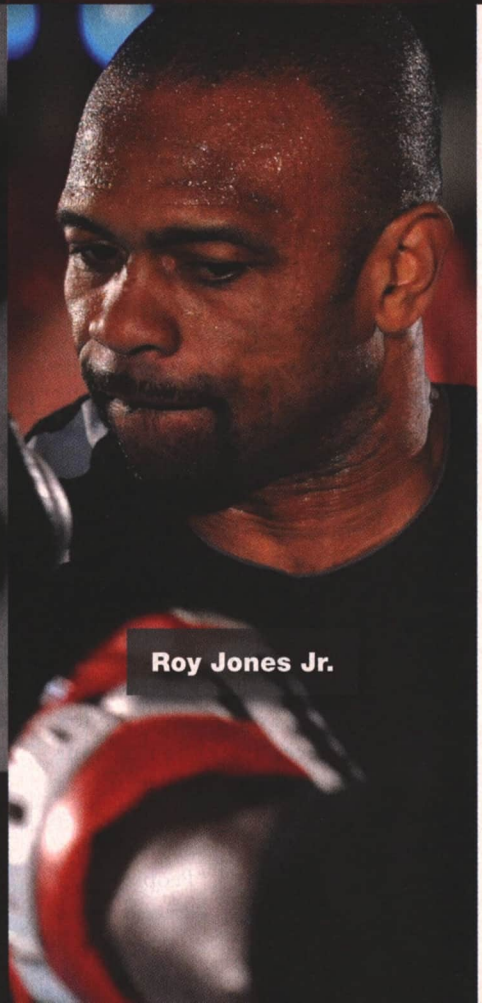
Carlos Monzon

Gennady Golovkin


Marvin Hagler


Bernard Hopkins


Jake LaMotta


Roy Jones Jr.

Ranking great fighters from different eras, when done seriously, is a daunting task. It's easy to sit down and put together a shoot-from-the-hip list. But that doesn't do justice to the fighters.

In recent years, I've sought to quantify ring greatness in a credible way. I've compiled lists of great champions who reigned at 135 and 147 pounds and matched them against each other in round-robin tournaments with the results of each fight being predicted by a panel of boxing industry experts.

This month, THE RING Magazine looks at modern 160-pound greats.

The middleweight champions chosen for the tournament, in alphabetical order, are Nino Benvenuti, Gennady Golovkin, Marvin Hagler, Bernard Hopkins, Roy Jones Jr., Jake LaMotta, Carlos Monzon, Sugar Ray Robinson and James Toney.

The list is limited to middleweights from the post-World War II era. It

does not include fighters like Stanley Ketchel, Harry Greb and Mickey Walker because not enough film footage is available to properly evaluate them. Golovkin is the wild card in the tournament. His fans have complained that none of today's elite fighters will fight him. This is his chance to be matched against the best.

The panelists were asked to assume for each hypothetical fight that both fighters were at the point in their respective careers when they were still able to make 160 pounds and were capable of duplicating their best 160-pound performance.

One can look to side issues such as same-day weigh-ins vs. day-before weigh-ins. And there's a difference between going 12 rounds as opposed to 15. But at the end of the day, either a fighter is very good, great or the greatest.

Twenty-four experts participated in the rankings process. Listed alphabetically, the panelists are:

Trainers: Teddy Atlas, Pat Burns and Don Turner

Media: Jerry Izenberg, Harold Lederman, Paulie Malignaggi, Larry Merchant and Michael Rosenthal

Matchmakers: Eric Bottjer, Don Elbaum, Bobby Goodman, Brad Goodman, Ron Katz, Mike Marchionte, Chris Middendorf, J Russell Peltz and Bruce Trampler

Historians: Craig Hamilton, Don McRae, Bob Mee, Clay Moyle, Adam Pollack, Randy Roberts and Mike Tyson

If each of the nine fighters listed above had fought the other eight, there would have been 36 fights. And there were 24 panelists. Thus, 864 fight predictions were entered into the data base. Fighters were awarded one point for each predicted win and a half-point for each predicted draw (too close to call). A perfect score would have been 192 points.

In two instances, an elector chose not to make a prediction on certain fights. One matchmaker said that he never saw Robinson, Golovkin or Benvenuti fight and didn't feel comfortable predicting outcomes for their matches. One historian felt the same way regarding Golovkin. A weighted average from the other electors was used to fill in the fights at issue in those two tournament grids.

In some instances, the fighters actually fought each other at middleweight. For example, Jones conclusively decisioned Hopkins when they fought at 160 pounds. But Hopkins' prime middleweight years came after that. Thus, two electors gave Hopkins the nod over Jones at 160 pounds and two called their matchup a draw.

Sugar Ray Robinson was the clear choice for No. 1.

Two years ago, Robinson finished first in a similar 147-pound fantasy tournament with a projected record of 186 wins, 3 losses, and 7 draws. Now the experts have rated Robinson No. 1 at 160 pounds. Fourteen of the 24 electors predicted that he would win all eight of his tournament fights. But Robinson is considered beatable at middleweight, where his projected tournament record is 173 wins, 17 losses and 2 draws.

Here, it should be noted that we're talking about the Sugar Ray Robinson of 1951, who put a brutal beating on LaMotta, not the Robinson who lost desire and saw his physical skills diminish as he got older.

Hagler, Jones and Monzon are grouped behind Robinson in that order.

"Picking against Robinson has become almost a sacrilege," one matchmaker said. "But I think Hagler at his best beats him."

Another Hagler backer noted, "I'll go with Hagler over Robinson. But if Marvin comes out in an orthodox stance and gives away the first four rounds like he did against Sugar Ray Leonard, I'm changing my vote."

Jones finished close behind Hagler, eliciting kudos such as, "People forget how good Roy was when he was young ... Jones was so athletically gifted at that time in his life – far beyond anything normal – that I can see him beating any of these guys ... Roy at middleweight was special with his amazing speed and power. He did things I never saw anyone else do. He could have stolen this tournament."

Three of the electors thought that Jones would win all eight of his fights. One elector gave Hagler (who finished second to Robinson in the voting) a perfect 8-0 record.

Three voters predicted that Monzon (who finished fourth) would win all eight of his fights. "The downside to Monzon," one matchmaker said, "is that he fought a lot of elite fighters but he didn't fight them at their peak."

LaMotta, Golovkin and Hopkins were also closely grouped.

"To be fair to LaMotta," one historian said, "he was slipping when he fought Robinson the last time, which was the only time they fought at middleweight. Was he as great as Robinson? No. But he beat Robinson once and he was good enough to test him every time."

Golovkin was 12-10-2 in head-to-head competition against Hopkins and edged Hopkins in the rankings by a half-point. A repeated theme with regard to Golovkin was, "He's good but I don't know how good because the best fighters in his weight range are avoiding him ... We just don't know about Golovkin. I've seen fighters who looked great be great. And I've seen fighters who looked great fall short ... Golovkin is hittable and these guys could hit. It's one thing to knock out Daniel Geale after he punches you in the face. It's very different if you're punched in the face by Carlos Monzon."

As for Hopkins; one trainer predicted that he would beat Jones at 160 pounds and fight Robinson even. "Hopkins got better after he lost to Jones," the trainer noted. "I think that Bernard at his best would have smothered Roy, roughed him up, and made Roy fight ugly."

Toney and Benvenuti rounded out the field. »

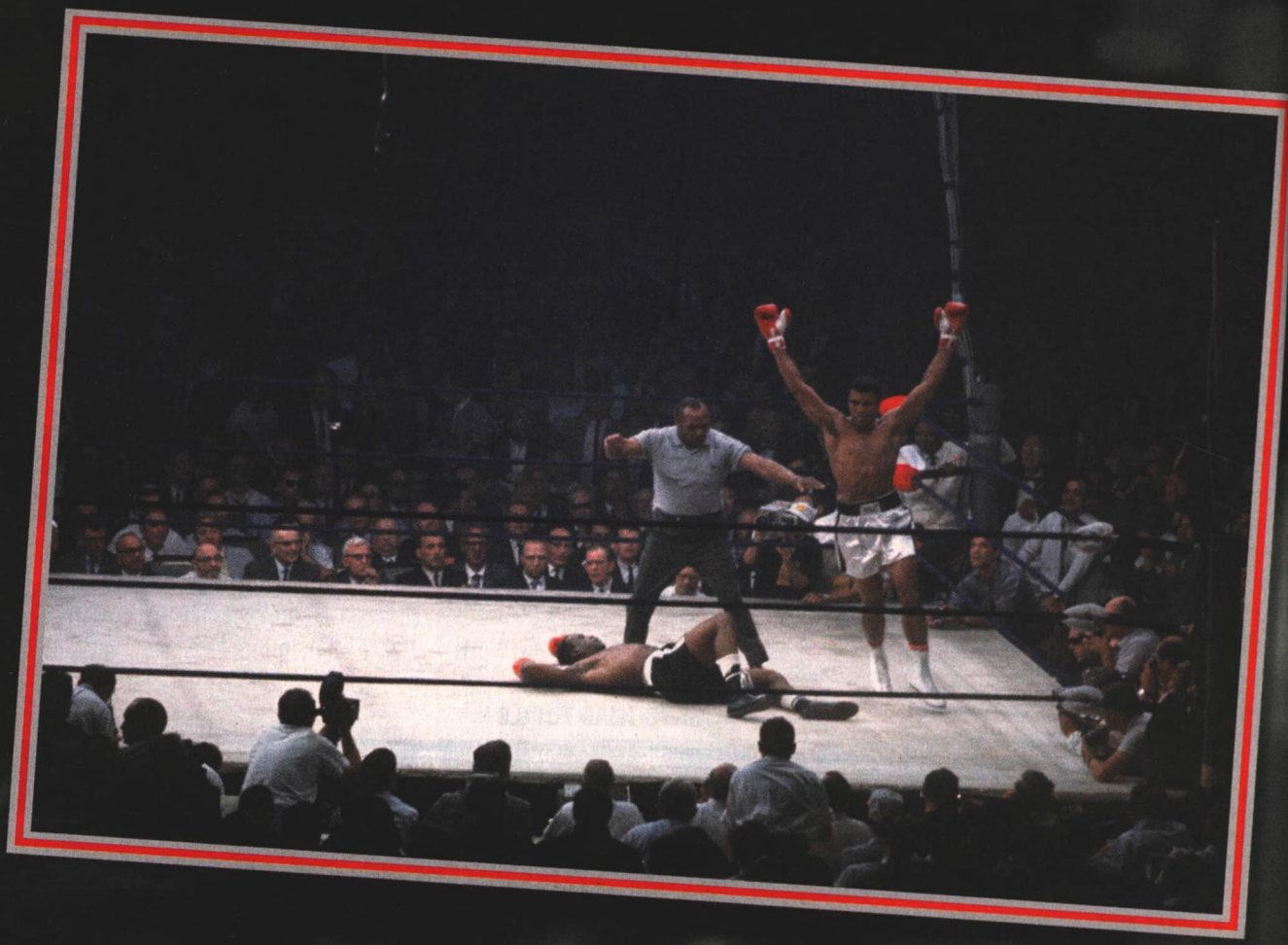
POINT TOTALS, OVERALL RANKING AND RANKING BY GROUPS OF EXPERTS

	Name/Points	Overall Rank	Matchmaker Rank	Trainer Rank	Media Rank	Historian Rank
	ROBINSON 174	1	1	1	1	1
	HAGLER 134	2	3	5	2 (tie)	2
	JONES 131	3	2	3	2 (tie)	3
	MONZON 126	4	4	2	2 (tie)	4
	LAMOTTA 71.5	5	5	4	7 (tie)	7
	GOLOVKIN 67.5	6	8	9	5	5
	HOPKINS 67	7	6	8	7 (tie)	6
	TONEY 54	8	7	7	6	8
	BENVENUTI 39	9	9	6	9	9

HEAD-TO-HEAD TOTALS

-	VS. ROBINSON	VS. HAGLER	VS. JONES	VS. MONZON	VS. LAMOTTA	VS. GOLOVKIN	VS. HOPKINS	VS. TONEY	VS. BENVENUTI
ROBINSON 173-17-2	-	18.5	19	20	24	23	22.5	23	24
HAGLER 129-53-10	5.5	-	13	13	20	20	20	20.5	22
JONES 130-60-2	5	11	-	12	18	19	21	23	22
MONZON 123-63-6	4	11	12	-	19	19	17.5	20.5	23
LAMOTTA 66-115-11	0	4	6	5	-	12	13	15.5	16
GOLOVKIN 64-121-7	1	4	5	5	12	-	13	12	15.5
HOPKINS 61-119-12	1.5	4	3	6.5	11	11	-	13.5	16.5
TONEY 52-136-4	1	3.5	1	3.5	8.5	12	10.5	-	14
BENVENUTI 37-151-4	0	2	2	1	8	8.5	7.5	10	-

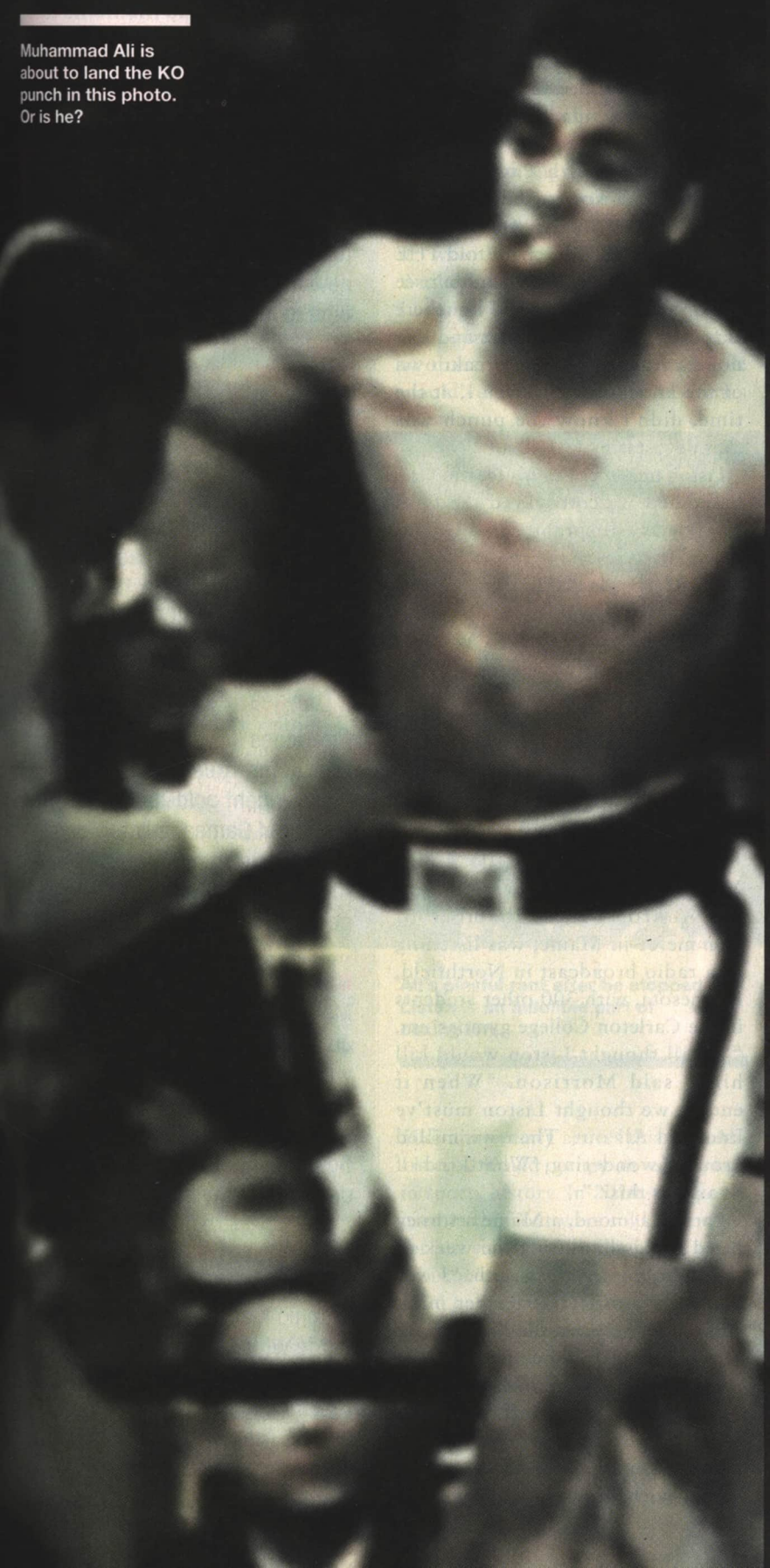
Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book ("Thomas Hauser on Boxing: Another Year Inside the Sweet Science") was published by the University of Arkansas Press.



DOUBLE SHOT

THE 'PHANTOM PUNCH' – WHICH DID LAND – INSTANTLY ENDED **MUHAMMAD ALI-SONNY LISTON II** AND SPARKED ONGOING DEBATE

By **Don Stradley**



Muhammad Ali is about to land the KO punch in this photo. Or is he?

"The country folk didn't like it. They stood up, some on chairs, and chanted: 'Fake ... fake ... fake.'"

John P. Carmichael
Chicago Daily News,
May 26, 1965

Watch it in slow motion and you can see the punch land. It was a right lead, timed perfectly by heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali and whipped at Sonny Liston's face. It was a stock Ali move, the sort of thing his trainer, Angelo Dundee, taught dozens of fighters at the Fifth Street Gym in Miami. Just slide to the right, Angelo would say, and drop one in. Watch it in slow motion and you'll see Liston's body shiver.

The punch, thrown only 1:43 into the bout, put Liston on the canvas the night of May 25, 1965, at St. Dominic's Youth Center in Lewiston, Maine. Ali seemed to go berserk then, yelling at Liston to get up. Referee Jersey Joe Walcott, a former heavyweight champion himself, struggled to uphold the rules of boxing by pushing Ali toward a neutral corner. Walcott would say later that he feared Ali might kick Liston in the head.

Ten rows back, a certified public accountant named Bob Pacios was astounded. "I was in the best location to see the punch," said Pacios, now in his 90s and still living near Lewiston. "A lot of people said they didn't see a punch but they weren't in a position to see it. I had a better view than the cameras recording the fight. Ali was dancing around the ring and as Liston charged forward Ali caught him right on the chin. Liston went down flat on his back. I don't think he knew where

hand around mine twice." Raymond's chief memory is of the ineptness of the event's organizers, men whose expertise was limited to overseeing candy and soda machines. "They knew nothing about boxing and I'll admit that I didn't either. But I could tell the whole thing was a circus."

"There were more people outside the arena than inside," said Pacios. "They were out there trying to see movie stars." Or maybe Robert Goulet, the celebrated Broadway performer who drew jeers with his botched version of the national anthem, setting the table for the pandemonium to come.

Prior to the stoppage, the fight resembled the previous year's meeting, with Ali gliding around the ring while Liston stalked him. "It was electric," Hall said. "When Ali and Liston came out of their dressing rooms, the place went ballistic. People don't understand now but boxing was a big deal. People were upset because they were just settling in and it was over. But just being there was well worth the experience." Most were hoping that Liston, an 8-5 betting favorite, would squash the increasingly unnerving Ali. Raymond's group anticipated a profitable relationship with Liston as the champion. After the bout, Raymond attended a gathering of his colleagues and saw "everyone in tears."

The footage shows the victorious Ali being lifted by his handlers but glowering at Liston, as if to say, "You disgraced yourself tonight." Ali later claimed the knockout blow was a "twist-like chop [that] Jack Johnson took to the graveyard" and was passed on to Ali by the comedian Stepin Fetchit. Ali dubbed it "the anchor punch" and demonstrated it for the press after the bout, corkscrewing his right fist into his left palm. "You can't see it," Ali told reporters, "but if you were hit with it, you all would be out." Years later, Ali admitted he didn't think he'd hit Liston hard enough to end the fight.

Predictably, the following day's headlines screamed about the bout's odd ending. Arthur Daley of The New York Times called it a "wretchedly handled, bush league production." Pundits and pugs alike debated the quality of Ali's punch. The New York Post's Jimmy Cannon declared it "wouldn't have crushed a grape." Walcott was a labeled a buffoon. Liston, who claimed he hadn't heard the count, was dismissed as a man of questionable character. None would've guessed that as the event's 50th anniversary arrives this year, Ali-Liston II would occupy an iconic place in sports history. In 2014, the gloves used in the bout were sold at auction for just short of $1 million.

Ali's playful rant after he stopped Liston is an indelible part of boxing lore.

Liston's mysterious death in January 1971 gave conspiracy theorists license to examine his entire career, the bout in Lewiston being akin to Area 51 for UFO hunters. "What fascinates me," said Merchant, "is that people would rather believe the myth and controversy [than give Ali credit]. It may have been because they simply didn't see the punch or it was because the fight had so much sound and fury around it, with Liston perceived as this monolithic force, that they refused to believe their lyin' eyes. The knockout was a stunning thing to see and the aftermath provided an interesting study in mass hysteria."

Many theories have been trotted out over the years, the most outrageous one being that Liston purposely lost because his wife was being held hostage by the Black Muslims. "It's hard to believe that such a secret could be kept," said Merchant, who added that his Las Vegas contacts knew of no betting coup that could've affected the Lewiston fight. "But things happen in boxing. There's a dark side. Isn't that part of the attraction?"

In the famous photograph of Ali standing over Liston, taken by Neil Leifer, Merchant can be seen in the background. He looks aghast. Yet, Merchant feels the result wasn't a surprise in hindsight. "Liston had looked so sluggish in training that his sparring partners were given a bonus to take it easy on him," said Merchant. "And consider what happened after Lewiston. The first time Liston fought a decent heavyweight, a tough Philadelphia fighter named Leotis Martin, Liston was beaten up and knocked out. What does that tell you?"

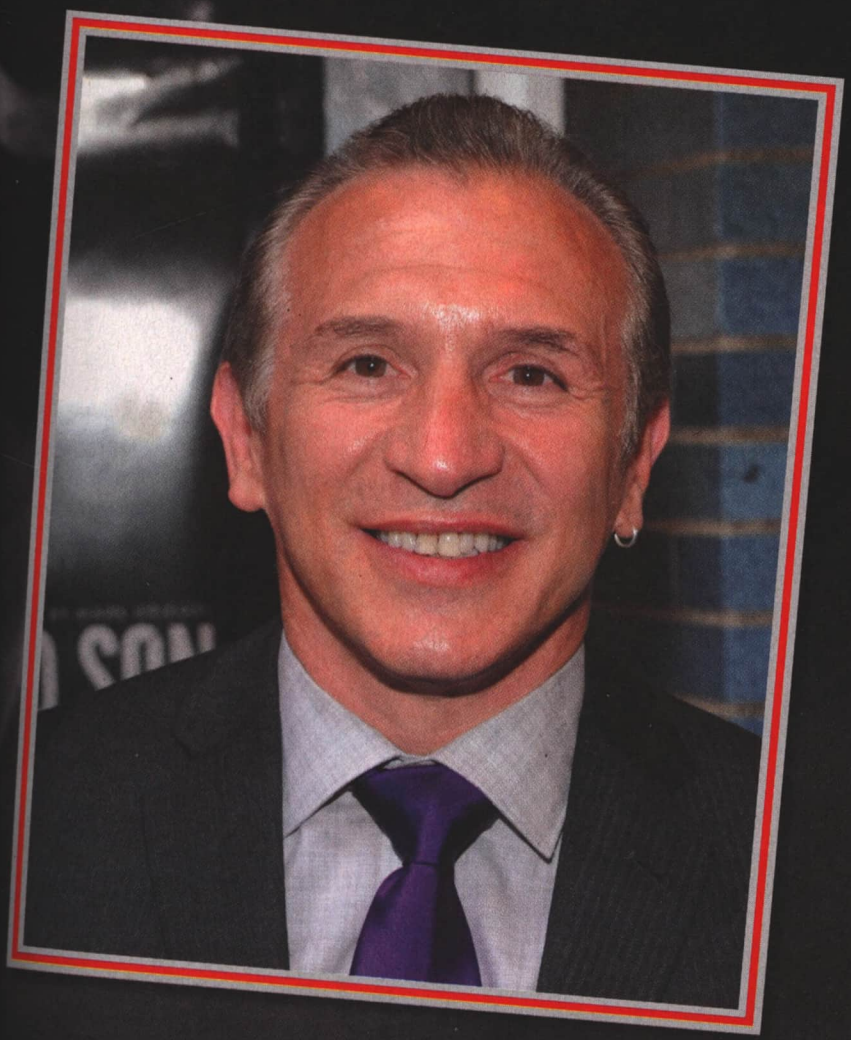
It tells us that Liston wasn't invincible, and probably was in decline when he fought Ali. But you couldn't have said this in 1965, not when Liston was suddenly cast in the unlikely role of hero. The sour ex-con with underworld affiliations was supposed to beat Ali and the Black Muslims the way Joe Louis once defeated the Nazis by way of Max Schmeling. Such an emotional burden may have worn Liston down by the time he arrived in Maine. All that was needed to finish him was a well-placed phantom shot to the chin. RING

Ray Mancini was one of the most popular fighters in the early 1980s.

SHOOTING STAR

RAY 'BOOM BOOM' MANCINI IS KNOWN FOR SHINING BRIGHTLY, BUT BRIEFLY, AND A TRAGEDY

By **Bernard Fernandez**



His boxing career more or less was launched as an undersized setup man for a very large heavyweight novelty act.

From that humble beginning to his upcoming June 14 induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame, the path of Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini has traversed a landscape of many ups and downs. He won the WBA lightweight championship, a distinction denied his World War II-veteran father (onetime lightweight contender Lenny "Boom Boom" Mancini), and became vastly popular in part because of his all-action style and in part because for his status as a devoted, promise-fulfilling son and beacon of hope for his Rust Belt hometown of Youngstown, Ohio.

But although America undoubtedly had a torrid love affair with "Boom Boom" the Younger, the passion was truncated: Discounting an unsuccessful, two-bout comeback, he fought for just 5½ years. And at a crucial point during that stretch he was unfairly depicted as the poster child for all that is supposedly wrong with boxing. To this day, Mancini is haunted by the memory of his tragic, 14th-round stoppage of South Korea's Duk Koo Kim. Almost immediately, Mancini's image morphed from that of the kid next door who made good to someone who had killed a young father from a faraway land with his fists, as Kim, who collapsed in the ring, was declared brain-dead and removed from life-support four days later. CBS, which had happily

promoted Mancini as its house fighter, moved quickly to sever its involvement in boxing, which affected the well-being of the sport far beyond the personal turmoil that sapped its onetime attraction of much of what had made him special.

Now 54 and living in Santa Monica, California, Mancini can only look back on his time in boxing with a mixture of accomplishment and, yes, regret.

"I don't think any fighter starts out thinking, 'OK, I'm going to do this, I'm going to do that, and I'll get in the Hall of Fame,'" Mancini, in his first year of eligibility, said when asked if he thought he'd receive a congratulatory call from IBHOF Executive Director Ed Brophy. "For me, I wanted to win the world title for my father. That was it. Then, when I won the title, I wanted to be the best champion that I could be, for the city of Youngstown, for my family. And third, I wanted to make some money and get some security.

"Winning the title is one thing. But there's been a lot of champions who had it for about a day and a half. I wanted to do all the things a good champion should do. Did I do all that I set out to do? Enough to become a Hall of Famer? I don't know. I didn't know what it takes to get in; I still don't. Is it stats? Is it impact? You tell me. But whatever it is, I'm very honored and very flattered to have made it."

Mancini's stats (29-5, 23 knockouts) are impressive but perhaps not overwhelmingly so. Although he was just 21 when he captured the WBA 135-pound title, on a first-round stoppage of Arturo Frias on May 8, 1982, in Las Vegas, it was his second shot at the big prize. The first came on Oct. 3, 1981, in Atlantic City, when WBC lightweight ruler Alexis Arguello registered a 14th-round technical-knockout

Mancini fought Livingstone Bramble on fairly even terms but ended up losing twice to him, in 1984 and 1985.

'THE GOOD SON'
THE RING Magazine reviewed Mark Kreigel's compelling biography of Ray Mancini. To read it, go to bily.com/mancini-book or scan the QR code.

victory. Following that defeat, the first of his career, Mancini scored two wins inside the distance to put himself in position to dethrone Frias and keep the promise he had made years earlier to his dad, whose own championship dreams were likely dashed when, on Nov. 10, 1944, near the French town of Metz, he was hit with shrapnel from a German mortar shell.

Maybe it all would have happened in any case for Mancini, who had all the prerequisites to be fast-tracked to stardom. He was white, Italian-American, good-looking, with a fan-friendly approach to his craft and a backstory that had even non-boxing fans reaching for their handkerchiefs once the saga of Lenny and his son gained traction. But there is at least a possibility that Mancini's destiny would have been denied, or at least delayed, were it not for a 6-foot-9, 255-pound defensive end for the Dallas Cowboys, Ed "Too Tall" Jones, who had decided to take a break from his NFL career to try his hand at professional boxing.

As the NFL's first overall pick in the 1974 draft, and a key figure of the Cowboys' famed "Doomsday Defense," Jones benefited from having all six of his bouts nationally televised by CBS, which aired Dallas games as frequently as possible. Jones was managed by former sports writer David Wolf, who successfully lobbied CBS to put another of his fighters, a young, unknown lightweight from Youngstown, on several of the telecasts in which "Too Tall" was the headliner.

Although Jones went 6-0 with five knockouts from Nov. 3, 1979, to Jan. 26, 1980, the opponents he was being spoon-fed weren't as difficult to get past as your average NFL offensive lineman. Mancini, who was 1-0 when he signed on for the whirlwind "Too Tall" tour, was 5-0 with four KOs as an opening act, making a name for himself that would continue to grow after Jones returned to the Cowboys for 10 additional seasons.

"Dave Wolf was a brilliant guy," Mancini said of his former manager. "My first fight (not with Jones) was

in my hometown of Youngstown. The second was in Phoenix, the third in Washington, D.C., the fourth in Dallas, the fifth back (also not with Jones) in Youngstown, the sixth in Jackson, Mississippi, the seventh in Indianapolis. He had me going around the country with 'Too Tall.' But all that moving around got me noticed by more people when I was on the way up. A lot of guys when they start out, they stay in one spot for a while."

The boxing world, having been introduced so early to Mancini, quickly became even more familiar with the tale of the little kid who loved to go down to the basement of the family home and pore over scrapbooks chronicling his father's pugilistic career. It became Ray's dream to live the dream that Lenny might have realized had it not been for his war injury.

Moments after Mancini blasted out Frias, he and Lenny, who was 84 when he died in 2003, embraced in a display of genuine love and affection. The scene would be played out time and again, in a manner of speaking, in film (a made-for-television movie) and in print ("The Good Son: The Life of Ray 'Boom Boom' Mancini," by author Mark Kriegel). Winning the title for his father meant more to the son than it did for himself. And it also provided a nice boost of civic pride to his hometown, which had fallen on hard economic times on Sept. 19, 1977, "Black Monday," when thousands of its citizens reported for work at Youngstown Sheet and Tube, one of the world's largest steel mills, and found the gates padlocked..

Mancini never knew the despair of losing a mill job – or maybe even the necessity of having one – but everything changed for him on Nov. 13, 1982, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. He and Duk Koo Kim were throwing everything they had at one another. And the damage that was mutually inflicted was as frightful to witness as it was electrifying. "[Kim] was the mirror image of Ray," said Top Rank matchmaker Bruce Trampler. "It was like Mancini

MODERN

RIDDICK BOWE
ACTIVE: 1989-2008
RECORD: 43-1 (33 KOs)
BACKGROUND: "Big Daddy" was indeed big – 6 feet 5 inches, around 235 pounds at his best – and both skilled and athletic. He is best remembered for his three-fight series against Evander Holyfield, in which he went 2-1 (his only loss). The onetime undisputed heavyweight champion probably didn't realize his potential because of his training habits but certainly left his mark.

NASEEM HAMED
ACTIVE: 1992-2002
RECORD: 36-1 (31 KOs)
BACKGROUND: "Prince" was known for his ring entrances and strange style but he also was a terrific boxer and powerful puncher. He won the featherweight title in 1995 and successfully defended it 15 times, 13 by knockout, then vacated prior to his only loss, a unanimous decision against Marco Antonio Barrera in 2001. He fought once more and then retired, leaving a legacy as one of the better British fighters ever.

RAY MANCINI
ACTIVE: 1979-92
RECORD: 29-5 (23 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Mancini was one of the most popular fighters of his era. "Boom Boom" won his only title by stopping Arturo Frias in one round in 1982 and successfully defended four times before losing it to Livingstone Bramble in 1984. However, Mancini might be best known for delivering the blows that killed Duk Koo Kim and giving a brave, but futile effort in a KO loss to Alexis Arguello.

OLD-TIMER

YOKO GUSHIKEN
ACTIVE: 1974-81
RECORD: 23-1 (15 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Gushiken was a long-reigning junior flyweight titleholder and one of the best Japanese fighters of all time. He stopped Juan Antonio Guzman in his ninth fight to win the WBA 108-pound title in 1976 and made 13 successful defenses, finally losing his belt to Pedro Flores in 1981. The "Fierce Eagle" was only 25 but never fought again. He never fought outside Japan.

MASAO OHBA
ACTIVE: 1966-73
RECORD: 35-2-1 (16 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Ohba's is a tragic story. The Tokyo product was only 21 when he stopped Berkrerk Chartvanchai in the 13th round to win the WBA flyweight title in 1970. He successfully defended five times, the last against Chartchai Chionoi on Jan. 1, 1973. Three weeks later he was killed in a car accident in Tokyo, leaving us to wonder what he might've accomplished.

KEN OVERLIN
ACTIVE: 1931-44
RECORD: 135-19-9 (23 KOs)
BACKGROUND: Overlin wasn't much of a puncher but, oh, could he box. The Navy champion crammed 165 fights into his 13-plus-year career and was extremely difficult to beat. He won recognition as middleweight champ by the New York State Athletic Commission by upsetting Ceferino Garcia in 1940 and had two successful defenses. He also beat Ezzard Charles and Fred Apostoli.

NON-PARTICIPANT

STEVE SMOGER
POSITION: Referee
BACKGROUND: Smoger has worked more than 200 title fights in his three-decade career as one of the most respected third men in the ring.

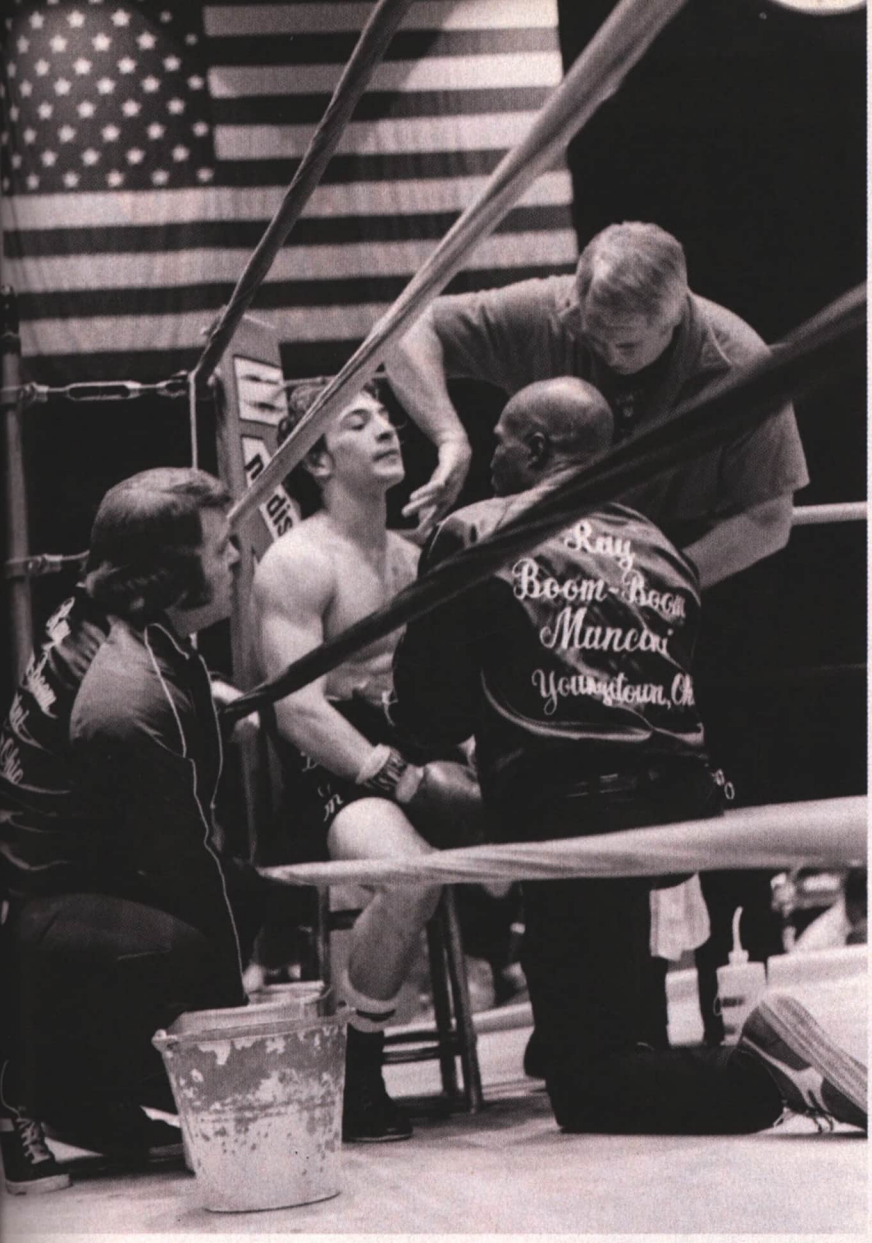
RAFAEL MENDOZA
POSITION: Manager
BACKGROUND: Mendoza has worked as a journalist and matchmaker but probably has made his biggest impact as a manager, advising 26 world champs.

JOHN F.X. CONDON
POSITION: Publicist
BACKGROUND: Condon became publicity director at Madison Square Garden in late 1950s and became president of MSG Boxing in 1981.

OBSERVER

JIM LAMPLEY
POSITION: Broadcaster
BACKGROUND: Lampley has been perhaps the most recognizable voice in boxing for ABC and then HBO over the past three-plus decades.

NIGEL COLLINS
POSTION: Editor/writer
BACKGROUND: The former two-time RING editor is also a respected author known for his integrity.



Mancini was entering his peak years when he stopped Norman Goins in two rounds in this 1981 fight.

vs. Mancini."

The actual Mancini dropped Kim in the 14th round and, although the valiant South Korean challenger beat the count, referee Richard Green stepped in to prevent him from absorbing further punishment. But by then it was already too late: Kim's death and the subsequent suicides of Kim's mother and Green drained the joy of boxing out of Mancini, as well as a substantial degree of his marketability.

"I can't say how long I would have continued had that fight not ended the way it did but certainly after that I was looking for the door," Mancini said.

Although he won four fights after the Kim tragedy, including two title defenses, the exit for Mancini presented itself in the form of back-to-back losses to Livingston Bramble, the first on a 14th-round stoppage, the second on a 15-round unanimous decision. A worsening problem – a tendency for the scar tissue around his eyes to be torn into bloody cuts – was a contributing factor in each instance. Mancini needed 14 stitches to close the gashes incurred in the first Bramble fight, 27 in the rematch.

There would be a four-year layoff from the ring, during which Mancini tried his hand at acting. But choice roles were few and far between, and, well, there is a certain comfort level in a man returning to what he knows best. But even though still chronologically young, the rust on "Boom Boom" showed as he lost a 12-round split decision to Hector Camacho on March 6, 1989, and was stopped in seven rounds by Greg Haugen on April 3, 1992.

"When my career ended, I was proud of it and I moved on," Mancini said. "Boxing had served its purpose. I left with no regrets. I had lost my love for the game. Plus, my style of fighting was not made for a long career. It was fan-friendly, so you sacrifice longevity to make your mark while you can.

"The thing I'm most proud of is that people remember my fights. It sure beats the alternative. But in every fight, you leave a piece of yourself. It comes down to how many pieces you have left. The bigger the war, the bigger piece you need, and the bigger piece you leave in the ring. It's sad, but when some guys are done, there's nothing left. Your body has only so many fights in it."

As was the case with the late Arturo Gatti, and maybe a couple of others, Mancini's worthiness for the IBHOF has been questioned by those who believe his prime was too short and lacking the stamp of legitimate greatness. Mancini realizes he wasn't a slam-dunk for induction and he said he could have lived with it had he been snubbed by voters.

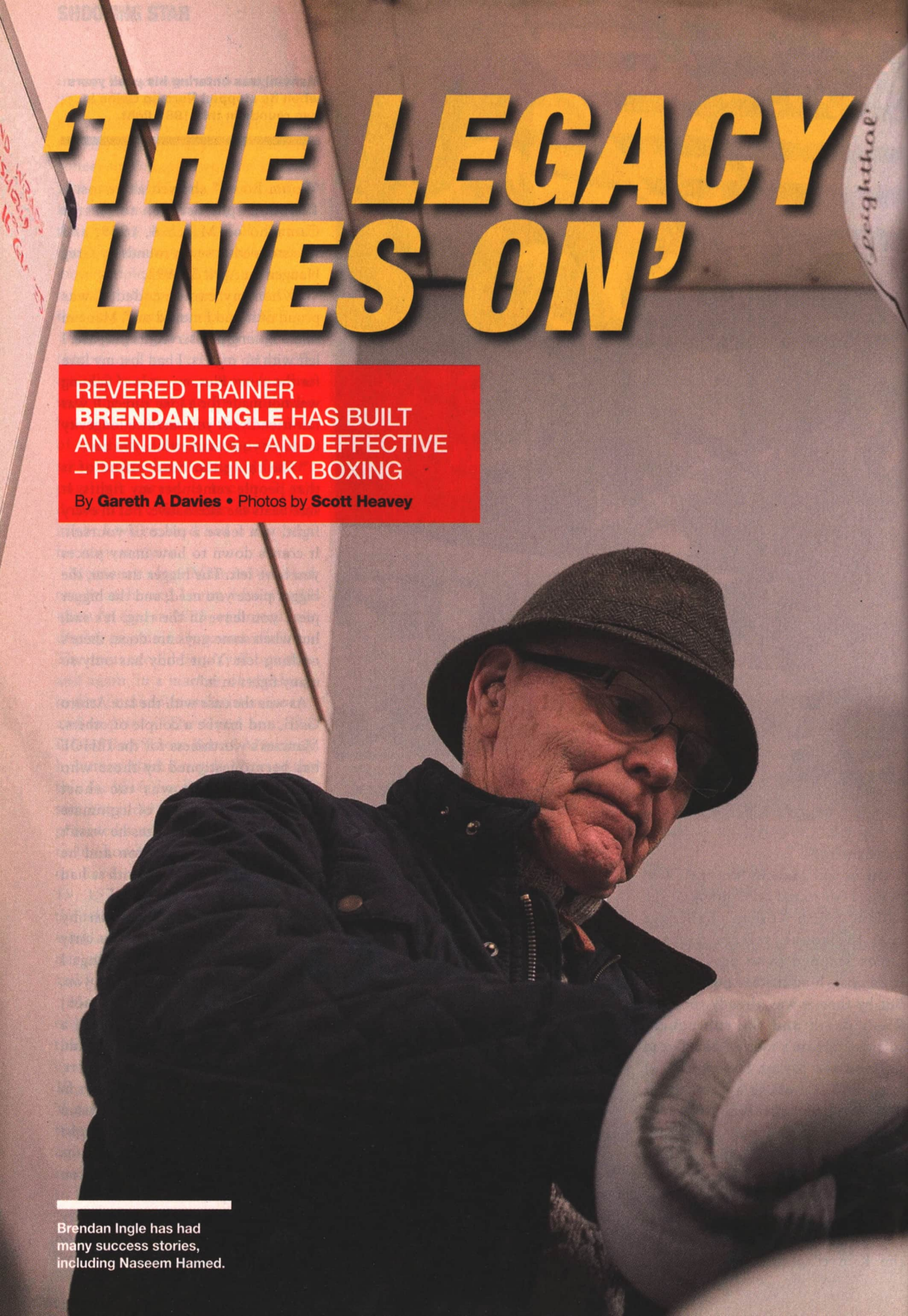
"Boxing was one chapter in my life," he said. "It wasn't the only chapter. There were other things I wanted to do. To be honest with you, I didn't think I warranted [induction] because I didn't have that long a career. But one writer told me, 'Yeah, but you had a big impact on the sport. You were part of a group of fighters in the early '80s when network television got back involved. You brought boxing into America's living rooms on Saturday afternoons because you were CBS' guy.'

"You know what? I hadn't really thought of it in that way. So I said, 'OK, I'll take it then.'" RING

'THE LEGACY LIVES ON'

REVERED TRAINER **BRENDAN INGLE** HAS BUILT AN ENDURING – AND EFFECTIVE – PRESENCE IN U.K. BOXING

By **Gareth A Davies** • Photos by **Scott Heavey**



Brendan Ingle has had many success stories, including Naseem Hamed.

As Brendan Ingle stood outside the Wincobank gym in Sheffield, he watched in horror as a young boxer spat a mouthful of water on the floor. His eyes bulged. His temperature soared. The boxer, aware of his faux pas, first wanted to turn back time, then simply offered an apology. A show of respect if nothing else.

Ingle, now 74, didn't know the name of the young boxer. He may have once known it but now, in the throes of Alzheimer's, he has a tough time remembering such details. So he called him "the black fella built like a tank" and, by way of a reprimand, explained that "coughs and sneezes spread diseases."

Brendan likes to rhyme. He believes in the rhythm of life. His speech, still clear and coherent at this advanced stage in his life, pops, crackles and fizzes with vitality and the young boxers who inhabit his gymnasium shadowbox while singing nursery rhymes and riddles to help with their timing.

Jerome, the spitting culprit, was later revealed to the trainer by another boxer, Callum, who departed the gym shortly afterward. Ingle was grateful for the information but still on a mission to right the wrongs of the world. And it was Callum, his informant, who next appeared in the firing line. Ingle collared him, looked him up and down and said, "His problem is his tattoos. He's marked himself for life. If he gets into trouble, the first thing that will happen when he goes to the police station is they'll get him to strip off and then they'll look for any tattoos.

"I'm not criticizing him for that. He's happy with it. It's when they start putting them on their face that I might say something. If he ends up doing something in boxing, I'll be over the moon. He comes in, he's well-mannered, he's polite, he spars anyone in there. Many times he'll come in and spar Kell Brook."

Despite the very public dressing down, Callum thanked his mentor for his words and shook his hand. It's called respect and it's something Brendan Ingle has earned over the course of five decades at the famous Wincobank gym, perched on a hillside in Sheffield, the Yorkshire city once renowned for its steel industry. They breed them tough here. And the Irish boxing Svengali has made it his home and will leave his legacy here for generations.

Callum and Jerome, like the rest, know what the old boy has done. They know about his adventures with "Prince" Naseem Hamed. They also know he's responsible for the careers of other Wincobank stars such as Johnny Nelson, Herol "Bomber" Graham, Ryan Rhodes and Junior Witter, all of whom thrived either as world champions or world-class contenders. And then there's the latest world champion from the gym, Brook, who acts as a more immediate template and role model for the likes of Callum and Jerome. These lads have trained with him, moreover.

"It was brilliant, wasn't it?" said Callum, referring to Brook's victory over American Shawn Porter in August. "We all knew he was going to do it but nobody else did. It was great to see him win on the big stage like that. It doesn't get any bigger."

Ingle's role in the Brook camp is considerably less hands-on than it was with, say, Hamed or Nelson, but that's solely because of his age and the emergence of his sons, Dominic and John, as respected trainers in their own right. They have taken over the reins and now look after the day-to-day running of a gym their father essentially created from scratch. That's not to say Brendan no longer gets his hands dirty, though. Quite the opposite, in fact.

"I've had all sorts of things happen to me health-wise but I still say my prayers and I'm still operating," he said. "I'm just glad to be alive and to still be going around. I'm glad to be able to go in there

and coach and take those boys on the pads. I feel smashing.

"The place is open every day, seven days a week. The [dues] are about seven [British pounds per week]. That's a pound for two or three sessions a day. People say I'm mad. They say, 'How do you keep the place going?' Well, I've managed to do it for nearly 50 years now.

"My son John lives just over at the back of the church and my other son, Dominic, lives in that house over there," explains Ingle, pointing literally across the road. His own house is diagonally across from the gym and a small playground where little children are playing. They look up at him as they pass. He nods back with a kindness.

"They're in twice a day, seven days a week, and they've been doing that since they were kids. Dominic is now in charge but things haven't changed. We're still turning out British, Commonwealth, European and world champions. The kids that wouldn't go to school are now graduating from college and university. But, if I tell you the secret, you'll be as wise as me."

To discover Brendan Ingle's secret, one must first travel back in time to 1957. That was the year he arrived in Sheffield from Dublin, Ireland, and immediately sensed the struggle and oppression in the steel city.

"I lived in a place called Manor Top, up Gleadless way," he said, explaining his journey across the Yorkshire city. "Then I was at Hillsborough Boys Club, then I went to Croft House and then I moved down here. It's a big area for steelworks but factories were closing and you had all different nationalities moving in. Then kids started fighting. People wanted to prove themselves."

He was privy to much of the fighting. It was everywhere. He saw kids running wild, in need of direction. They were frustrated. They were clueless. Brendan was quite different.

"I used to get up at a quarter to four in the morning, run on the Wood Bottom, up Shiregreen and then I'd run to Ecclesfield and then go and work 12 hours as a blacksmith striker with a hammer," he said, describing an 8-mile run, much of it up and down steep hills. "I loved the job in the blacksmith's because I was dyslexic. Spelling used to drive me mad. Right hand. R-I-G-H-T. Write a letter. W-R-I-T-E. The name Wright. W-R-I-G-H-T. I used to think to myself, why am I getting the cane for getting words wrong all the time?" When he came home, his wife helped him to read.

Yet unlike some of the unruly tearaways he grew accustomed to seeing in Wincobank, Brendan was raised properly. He knew right from wrong. He knew how to behave. It was why he'd often be out picking up litter and it was why one day he was asked by the local vicar to carry out community work in the local area to help save the lost souls that surrounded him.

Seeing it as a challenge, something he could sink his teeth into, Ingle accepted, and so the weekly dance at St Thomas' church hall was born. After that came the boxing gym, St Thomas' Boys & Girls Club. Dancing turned into fighting and pretty soon Ingle, a free spirit, a maverick, the great improviser, was combining the two to concoct a boxing style all of his own, a style imprinted on each of the men he trained, from Hamed and Graham to Nelson and Rhodes. Even his lumbering heavyweights boxed the same way. They were all light on their toes, in and out, masters of range and timing, each of them utterly comfortable with their hands down by their sides. They were ostensibly matadors with gloves. Hit and don't get hit was their mantra.

"Instinctively, when someone's in a fight, they'll kick and scratch," said Ingle. "Or they'll butt you or bite you. But when you look at that gym, you see an art form. You see kids learning how to box. It's different. That's why I put those lines down there on the floor. It was an idea I had years ago. It was supposed to help with footwork. That is the start of everything in boxing."

More than just a fighting style, it became an attitude and a lifestyle for many of the boxers who later became staples of the Wincobank gym. They carried a cocksure swagger. They looked after themselves, both inside and outside the ring. They were slicker than your average fighter. They were more often than not switch-hitters. Clever, cool, perpetually upbeat and positive. Ingle modeled them on himself.

"People say to me, 'Brendan, every time I come here you're talking and you've got them singing and dancing and hitting the bags. What do you think the secret of life is?' I say, 'It's very simple. Every morning you wake up, you're a millionaire. Every hour you live is a bonus. You don't want to be the richest person in the world, you want to be the happiest.' They say, 'OK, what's happiness?' I say, 'It's a frame of mind. Unfortunately, if you knock around with idiots, you finish up an idiot.' They say, 'That doesn't seem a very nice statement.' I say, 'I get them coming in here. They're idiots getting chucked out of school. They're in arguments and they're in fights. If you come in here, you do as you're told. If you don't do as you're told, you don't come in.'"

Though the gym is an enjoyable environment in which to thrive, the underlying seriousness and discipline was etched on the faces of each of the boxers, young and old, who said their goodbyes to Ingle that evening. They worship him. They appreciate him. The Ingle name, in Sheffield at least, carries the power of an Ali or a Tyson. Shrouded in similar mystique, it's just as almighty.

"It's all about time and patience," he said. "I'm in charge. If they look good, I look good. It's simple logic. If they make money, I make money.

Ingle modeled his students after himself: clever, cool, perpetually upbeat and positive.

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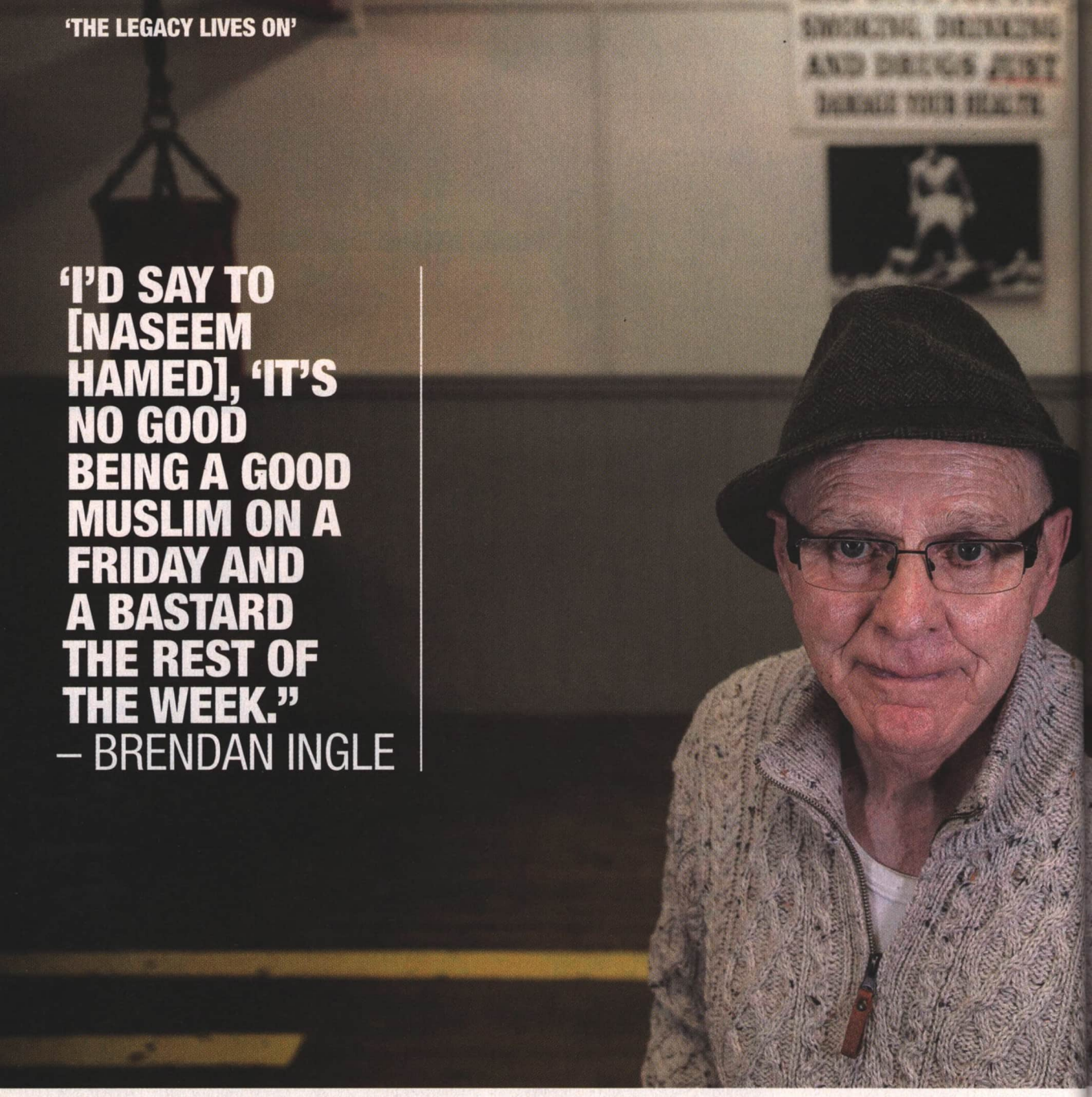


'I'D SAY TO [NASEEM HAMED], 'IT'S NO GOOD BEING A GOOD MUSLIM ON A FRIDAY AND A BASTARD THE REST OF THE WEEK."
– BRENDAN INGLE

Who wants to finish up with a flat nose and cauliflower ears? People don't realize that a few years ago I started the Sheffield, Rotherham and District Ex-Boxers Association. I came across so many people with flat noses, cauliflower ears and a croak in a voice from being punched in the throat. I wanted to do something to help them."

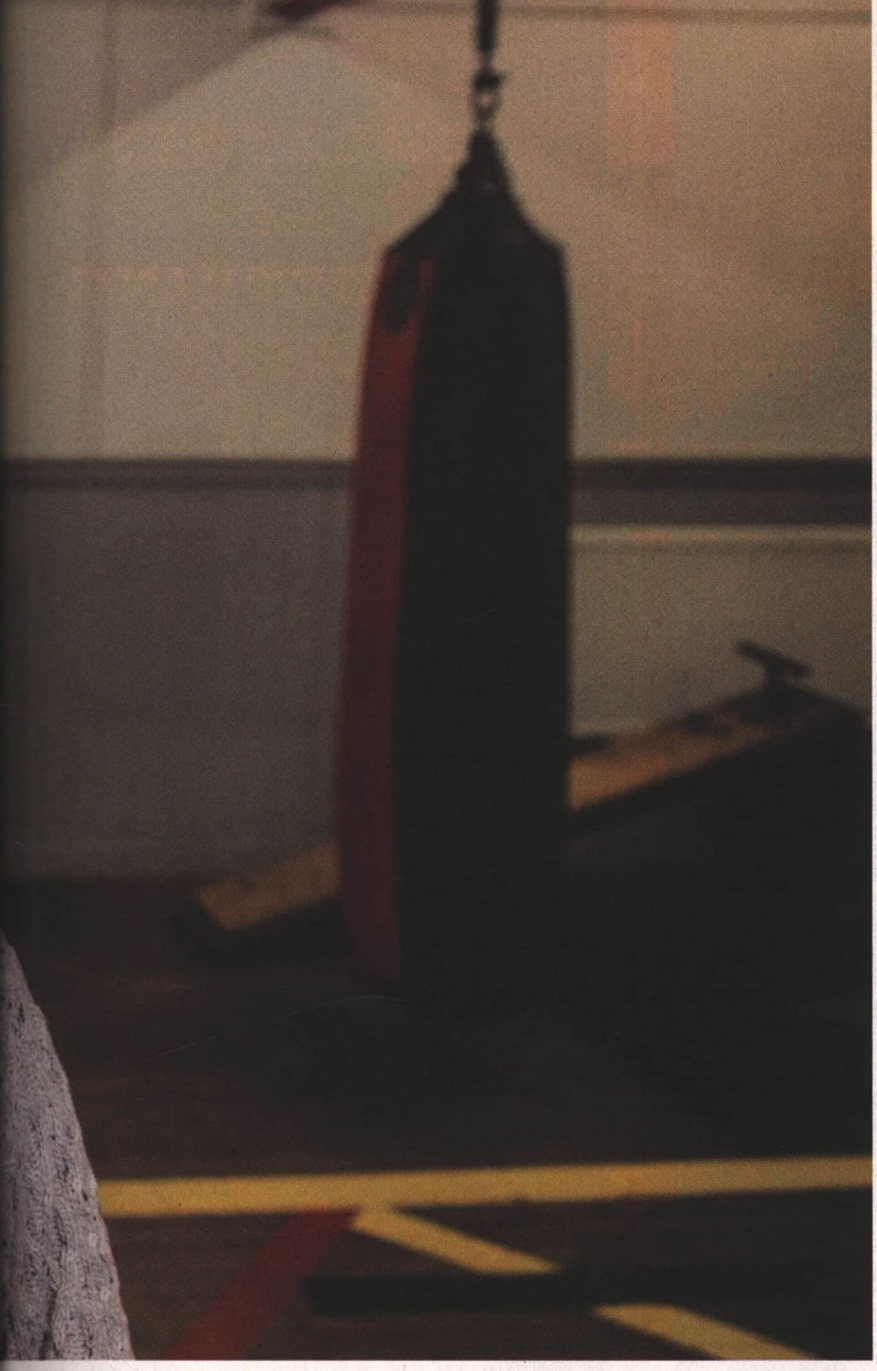
Perhaps the greatest testament to the Ingle way – to be elusive, to be defensive-minded – are the coherent voices and clean faces of his retired former pupils.

For example, Hamed, though now as wide as he is tall, is just as brash and fast-talking as ever while the likes of Rhodes, Graham and Nelson have all appeared on television as pundits. What's more, Nelson now enjoys a role as a boxing presenter on Sky Sports.

"We used to go down to Radio Sheffield with Bob Jackson and he was a big help," said Ingle. "Johnny was great on there. I told him he'd go into television and become a commentator on all the fights. He had gone through everything as a boxer, remember. Every level.

"When Johnny Nelson first came down here, people would say, 'Why are you wasting your time with him?' I couldn't understand what they meant. I said, 'In time, he's going to end up British, European and world champion.' They thought I'd lost the plot."

After losing the first three bouts of his professional career, a determined Nelson went on to win the full set of cruiserweight titles – British, European and world. He then defended his WBO world cruiserweight title a division record 13 times before retiring in 2005. He is even talking about a potential



Alzheimer's disease hasn't slowed Ingle down.

comeback against Marco Huck.

Meanwhile, Nelson's stablemate at the time, Ryan Rhodes, could have been the best of the bunch, says Ingle. "To me, Ryan Rhodes underachieved," he said. "He was better than Naseem Hamed.

"The unfortunate thing was his mother and father were always fighting and battling. His parents splitting up affected him badly, I think. He developed the skills in here and he should have won many world titles. But once there's problems with the parents, you don't know what effect it will have on the kids. The mother blamed me. The words she used were, 'He wants to get away from those f--king Ingles. He's going to do f--king nothing with them.' I thought to myself, 'I don't talk to anyone like that.'"

It paled in comparison to the issues he'd later have with Hamed, however. The Paddy and The Prince famously conquered the boxing world together, winning the WBO world featherweight title in 1995 and adding the IBF version along the way before splitting in 1998. Memories, therefore, are bittersweet for Ingle.

"Naseem Hamed's dad's shop was just over there," he said, pointing to a 24-hour corner grocery store no more than 150 yards from the gym. "That's how near he lived. I'd say to him, 'It's no good being a good Muslim on a Friday and a bastard the rest of the week. Just as it's no good being a good Christian on a Sunday and a bastard the rest of the week.' Civility and good manners cost nothing. Don't let money become your god. The nicest thing about money is the independence it gives you.

"Unfortunately, he had a brother, Riath, and he was a snake. He was a horrible person. He wanted control. It ruined everything."

Still, just as Alzheimer's hasn't slowed him, the experience with Naz, which later soured and caused a separation, has failed to extinguish Ingle's fervor for boxing. The Wincobank, you see, is bigger than just one man. It is a production line, a conveyer belt of champions and reformed characters. And Kell Brook, the new IBF world welterweight champion, is its latest success story. For now, he carries the torch. The legacy lives on.

"See that over there?" said Ingle, happily married with five children, as he pointed across the road at the church. "I keep the church garden clean by picking the litter up round there. People ask me why I do it. I say, 'Because I live around here.' My mother and father, when we were back in Dublin, would make me do the same. It goes in circles." And that is Ingle's most poignant legacy: not just creating champions, which he has done with aplomb by honing a few diamonds, but changing people and a community, through preaching a way of life – through the skills, discipline and knowledge from a life lived in a close-knit corner, with boxing the cornerstone. RING

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Dr. Peter Hamlyn (below center) performed five operations to save the life of Michael Watson (left) 24 years ago. They are pictured with our correspondent Gareth A Davies (top), who arranged the reunion, and Watson's friend, Len Ballack.

MEDICAL MIRACLE

MICHAEL WATSON IS REUNITED WITH THE DOCTOR WHO SAVED HIM AFTER A NEAR-FATAL BRAIN INJURY

By **Gareth A Davies**

Michael Watson has a calmness about him which defies the extraordinary events that define his life. It was a poignant moment on March 15, when Watson celebrated his 50th birthday. Incredibly, 24 years have passed since he suffered a horrific, near-fatal brain injury, a blood clot forming on his brain minutes after his world-title fight with Chris Eubank at the home of Tottenham Hotspur, White Hart Lane, in London.

It was a medical miracle when he survived then. It is still a miracle today, explained consultant neurosurgeon Peter Hamlyn at a lunch I organized to re-unite the two men at one of Watson's favorite restaurants in a gentrified parade in Hackney, north London, close to where Watson grew up.

The hair is graying now but Watson's beaming smile and his peaceful, friendly presence still radiate vitality. And he brings joy to everyone around him.

Hamlyn carried out five operations, all of them life-saving, after the former boxer's brain went into horrific turns and twists with the trauma he had suffered. The two men will share a lifelong bond. They have altered each other's lives ineradicably.

Hamlyn believes Watson has changed the course of medical care for sportspeople. He was also, recalls Hamlyn, god-like in his physical strength.

"When I first met Michael, getting through the first 24 minutes was going to be touch and go," Hamlyn said. "Twenty-four years is, well, just an enduring miracle."

Hamlyn then turned to face Watson. "The first morning, when I went on to the ITU (intensive treatment unit), and I saw you lying there all those years ago," he said, "physically, you looked like some Greek god." It was a special, emotional moment.

"Michael was one of the best physical specimens I've ever seen. An incredible body. There was no fat on him, just lean muscle," continued

U.K. TOP 10

1. **CARL FROCH**
2. **AMIR KHAN**
3. **KELL BROOK**
4. **CARL FRAMPTON**
5. **JAMES DEGALE**
6. **TYSON FURY**
7. **SCOTT QUIGG**
8. **GEORGE GROVES**
9. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
10. **MARTIN MURRAY**

11-15: Billy Joe Saunders, Kid Galahad, Paul Butler, Tony Bellew, Callum Smith.
(Through fights of March 22, 2015)

Hamlyn, speaking of a fighter who, in his athletic prime and aged 26, had just been through 11 rounds against another specimen in Eubank in their second encounter. Watson had floored Eubank that round but then suffered a shuddering uppercut himself, which saw him crumple into the ropes.

"He was lying there on a ventilator but still had a peace about him," Hamlyn said. "I'm sure Mike only survived because he was so physically fit. He had a massive amount of health reserve."

Watson has a different take on it.

"I've always had a fighting spirit and I know that's what got me through it. I don't worry about getting older," he said. "Age is only a number. It's still day by day for me. Time does fly. I'm 50 years young. What has happened to me has made me a better person. I'm a lot stronger and it has changed my personality for the better. It's given me more love and concern for other people, especially the helpless."

When I contacted Chris Eubank, he had lovely words to say about a man to whom he feels linked forever because of the events on the night they fought and the aftermath. Eubank thought long and hard about what he wanted to say.

"I wish Michael a very happy birthday and many happy returns," he said. "Whenever I speak of Michael, he is always a benchmark in my life. He will forever be inextricably linked to my life. Whatever happens in his life is somehow connected to mine because of what happened all those years ago.

"What happens in that ring is profound and far much more than meets the eye. I'm not just speaking of the injuries sustained by him. I'm talking about how close you come to a man and how much you respect that person as a warrior. What he withstood from me in that ring, and indeed, vice versa on Sept. 21, 1991. A very profound relationship. I hope Michael and myself go on to live very long lives." Nice touch.

PAUL SMITH AND MARTIN MURRAY

British boxing suffered a double blow on one February night in Berlin and Monte Carlo when Paul Smith and Martin Murray suffered defeats in world-title encounters.

Smith was unable to overcome a buoyant Arthur Abraham in his second bid to wrest the WBO super middleweight title from the champion. The proud Liverpudlian, 32, one of four boxing brothers, was game once more against a resurgent Abraham who thoroughly deserved a unanimous points decision – 116-112, 117-111 and 117-111 – on the judges' cards.

Abraham's jab was much more effective this time and he bullied Smith out of contention in the second third of the fight. The first time the pair had met, last year, Smith received a widely condemned set of scores but this was a fair result.

Abraham was defending his title for the third time.

In Monte Carlo, meanwhile, Murray fell victim to the beautiful, brutal artistry of Gennady Golovkin, who notched up the 29th stoppage of his unbeaten 32-fight career. The champion, fast becoming one of the most admired fighters in the sport, held firm as the WBA middleweight king.

But, boy, was Murray obdurate and resilient. The aggressive, stalking Kazakhstani never took a backward step. Murray was down in the fourth, held on gamely but was down again in the 10th from a right hand, mostly worn down through relentless pressure, and in the 11th, referee Luis Pabon stepped in to stop the contest after two heavy right hooks. Murray will come again; Golovkin simply marches on.

CARL FRAMPTON

The following weekend Carl Frampton enhanced his credentials as a box-office attraction yet again, moving a step forward in his mission to dominate the junior featherweight division.

The 28-year-old Northern Irishman, roared by partisan support in Belfast, brutally stopped mandatory challenger Chris Avalos in the fifth round to retain his IBF title and underscore the notion that he could be something special. The fight was shown on network television, which will have won him a new army of followers.

Frampton's fame was also augmented by his elevation to No. 1-rated 122-pounder in the world by THE RING Magazine. Rightly so.

Scott Quigg, Guillermo Rigondeaux, Leo Santa Cruz and Kid Galahad are all great potential opponents for the fighter and his fans. If the deal can be done with Quigg's promoter, Eddie Hearn, it would be a titanic fight in the U.K.

THE FURYS

Also on Feb. 28, in London, unbeaten heavyweight Tyson Fury kept his world-title hopes alive for this year with a patient dismantling of Christian Hammer.

In a sense, the jury is still out on Fury but he is as deserving of a title shot against Wladimir Klitschko or Deontay Wilder as anyone else out there. The 6-foot-9 fighter has flaws, yes, but he has world-class cojones and his self-belief and love of boxing cannot be denied. It would be intriguing to see him in with either champion, in part because his personality and sense of fun with the media – and his wont to sing after victories in the ring – make him a promoter's dream.

Fury was also bolstered by the return of his father, John, in his corner. John has been released from prison after serving five years inside for gouging an enemy's eye out. Alongside his brother Peter, who has been training Tyson in his absence, the group was complete again.

Seven years ago, on Dec. 6, a few hours before Tyson Fury made his professional debut on the night Carl Froch beat Jean Pascal for the WBC title in front of 5 million television viewers, I was sitting with John Fury as he related the struggles of baby Tyson being born. John had opened up his right hand to show the size of the tiny baby born prematurely in front of him.

"The doctors told me there was not much chance of him living and I had lost two daughters in the same way who had been born prematurely," Fury said. "They told me there was not much hope for him. It was 1988, Mike Tyson was in his pomp as world heavyweight champion, and so I said, 'Let's call him Tyson.' The doctors just looked at me and smiled.

"I said he'd end up 7-foot tall and heavyweight champion of the world and we are almost there."

It had been a tough five years, he added, but he remains deeply proud of his son, the baby who almost never made it.

THE EUBANKS

Keeping to the father-son theme, it seems that everyone has an opinion on Chris Eubank Sr.

Sit ringside at any of his son Chris' fights and without fail, the asides invariably turn to whether Senior should be in the corner or not.

Many observers have questioned whether the elder Eubank could be meddling, returning vicariously to the once extraordinarily successful career 20 years ago which saw him become a two-weight world champion.

Eubank Jr. will have none of that.

"I've heard the criticism and I take no notice of it," he said. "There's only a few people in the country who have as much experience on the boxing scene as my father, especially at world level. When I lost to (Billy Joe) Saunders, he was disappointed for me not disappointed with me.

"For him to be there and behind me is a blessing. I use it to my advantage. Knowing that he has so much confidence in me is a big thing. Nothing has changed either. Everything he said about me before, he still believes. It's a great confidence booster.

"Everyone's entitled to their opinion about my father. Some people think he's a distraction and takes some of my shine away, but, for me, that's not the case. I'm around my father all of the time so the things that people see as distracting are things I've seen for years on a daily basis. It's second nature to me. It's a great partnership and one that is going to continue."

But is some of his drive and ambition derived from proving something to his father?

"My father is just one person," he said. "I'm trying to prove something to the entire British public, to everybody. I look up to my father, he's done what he's done, and I want to emulate his achievements and become as successful as he was."

On the same London card Fury defeated Hammer, Eubank Jr. bounced back after his defeat to Saunders to stop Dmitry Chudinov in the 12th and final round. The 25-year-old's desire to look for the finish late in the fight speaks volumes for the fighter he is becoming. Either a rematch with Saunders or a world-title challenge looks inevitable this year.

The younger Eubank may say much less than the old man but like father, like son.

AND FINALLY ...

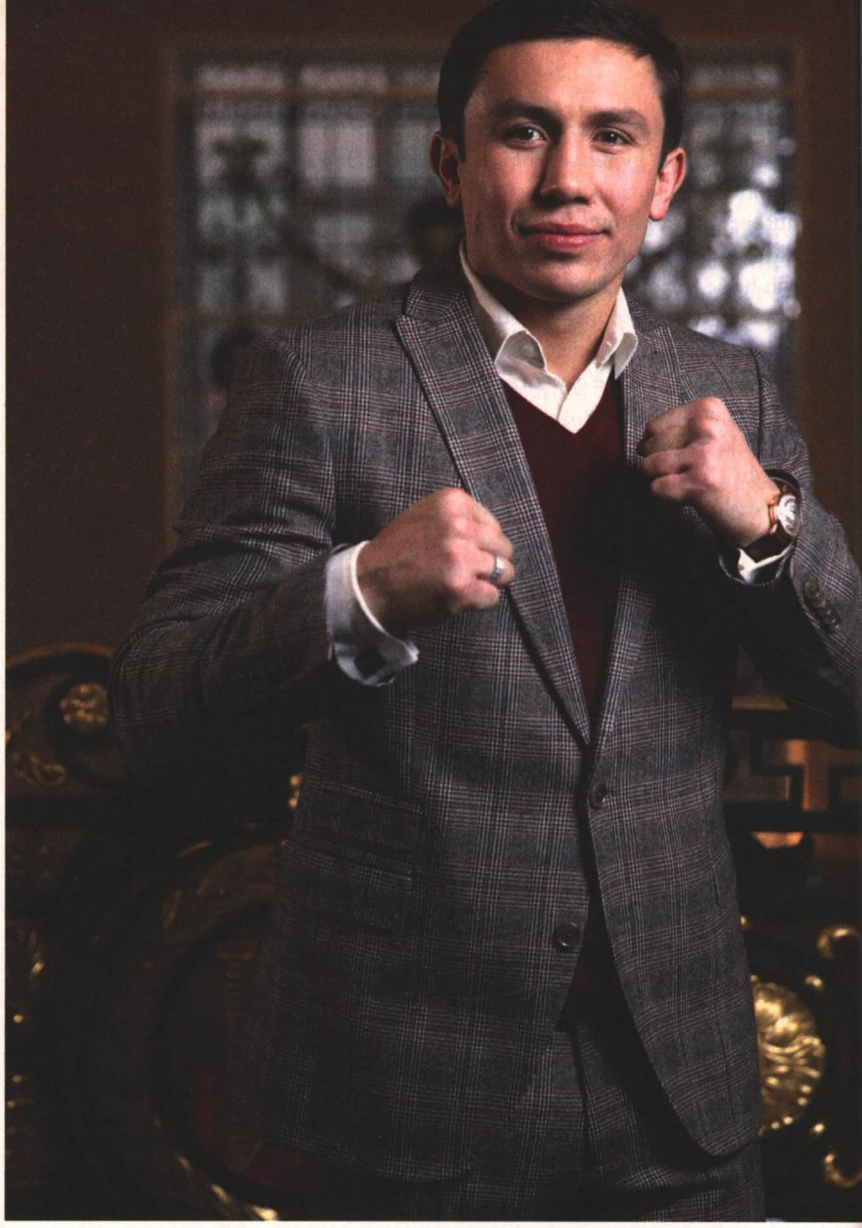
British Prime Minister David Cameron has approved a bid for The Boxing Academy in Hackney to become a "free school," meaning it can give eight nationally recognized educational qualifications to 13-16 year olds in what the school explains is "an alternative to exclusion" for pupils who have been difficult to manage and are in danger of being thrown out of mainstream schools. Since 2007, The Boxing Academy has been successful in turning around the lives of some of the most vulnerable young people in the district. There are 56 students on the role. Students will be referred from more than 25 schools in seven London districts. Build it and they will come. RING

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**



Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The following excerpts are from the March 20, 2015, edition of the Friday mailbag.

ANDREAS, from Montreal, asked Fischer how he would compare Gennady Golovkin's current run at middleweight with greats of the past, such as Bernard Hopkins, in terms of quality of opposition, total title defenses, etc. Andreas, who became a fan during the 1990s, tried to compare Golovkin's current title reign with Hopkins' run at middleweight. He noted that the only "A-listers" on Hopkins' 160-pound resume are Felix Trinidad and Oscar De La Hoya, to go with "some other recognizable names," such as William Joppy, John David Jackson and Glen Johnson. Andreas seemed surprised that Hopkins' title run was still seen as something "very special" once the future Hall of Famer achieved the title defense record. He also asked Fischer who would win a mythical matchup between Golovkin and the prime middleweight version of Hopkins.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I have to go with Hopkins by close decision at this point in Golovkin's career. Of course, I can look at B-Hop's entire middleweight run when thinking about this mythical matchup, whereas GGG is still in his 160-pound title reign. I reserve the right to change my opinion if Golovkin goes on to accomplish special things at middleweight and super middleweight.

How do I compare Hopkins' middleweight run to GGG's? To be honest, I don't. I haven't felt the need to compare Golovkin to great middleweight champs of the past – yet. He's still making his name and staking his claim (imagine Don King's voice when you read that line) at 160 pounds. When Golovkin is done with middleweight and officially moves up to super middleweight, then maybe I'll feel the need to compare him to Hopkins, Marvin Hagler or Carlos Monzon. Right now, off the top of my head (without consulting boxrec.com), I'd have to go with Hopkins' resume at 160 pounds over GGG's middleweight accomplishments. Was the overall quality of B-Hop's opposition THAT much better than Golovkin's? No. But Hopkins did face three then-future Hall of Famers (Tito, De La Hoya and a young, undefeated Roy Jones Jr.), plus a few dangerous bucks (the young, unbeaten version of Johnson, wild puncher Antwun Echols and a large southpaw in Syd Vanderpool), as well as difficult styles (Jackson and two-time titleholder Keith Holmes). Golovkin has faced some dangerous

RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer would pick a peak Bernard Hopkins to beat Gennady Golovkin (left) but says that could change as GGG evolves.

dudes (Curtis Stevens and Marco Antonio Rubio) and solid contenders (Daniel Geale and Martin Murray) but he still needs to prove that he can handle the difficult styles, which is why Willie Monroe Jr. got the call to the May 16 "Big Drama Show."

We won't really know how good (or potentially great) GGG is until he shares the ring with future Hall of Famers (which is one reason he wants to get his heavy hands on Miguel Cotto). Until that happens you can expect fans to continue to be divided in their view of the Good Boy Killa. Oh, and by the way, this line from your email caused me to chuckle: "[Hopkins'] title run was still seen as something very special when he achieved the record." Take it from someone who was around Hopkins (in camp and at the fights) during the peak of his middleweight title reign (1999-2001): He was not appreciated or viewed as anything special. And there were plenty of fans and boxing pundits who still claimed B-Hop was "crap" after he set the middleweight defense record at 20 and after his disputed back-to-back losses to Jermain Taylor. In fact, the VERY SAME things that are being said about Golovkin right now were said about Hopkins 10-15 years ago.

D., FROM SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA, is a Mexican-American fan who says he loves all of the boxing legends Mexico has produced. He asked Fischer which current Mexican star – Canelo Alvarez or Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. – has the "higher ceiling"? He also presented the following mythical matchups: Manny Pacquiao vs. Shane Mosley at 135 pounds, Oscar De La Hoya vs. Canelo at 154 pounds, Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. vs. Roberto Duran at 140 pounds and Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Pernell Whitaker at 140 pounds.

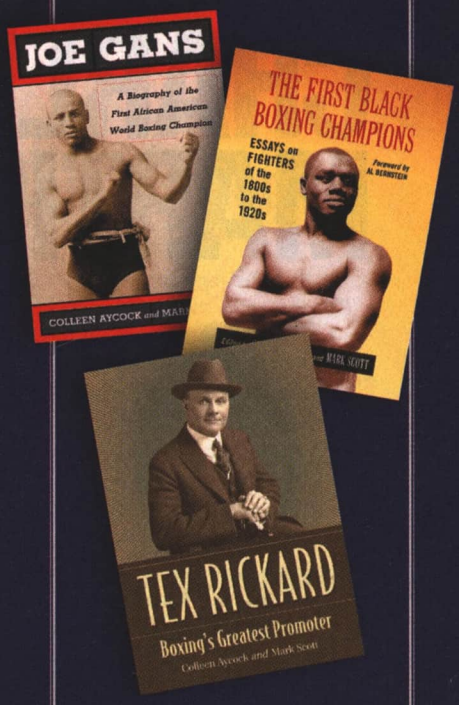
DOUGIE'S REPLY: That's an easy question, D. I don't know how high Canelo's ceiling is but I do know that it's higher than Chavez Jr.'s. When I first became aware of both fighters (when they were still in their teens), I thought Chavez had more potential due to his famous name and his taller frame, which I figured would fill out (and boy, did it ever!). However, Canelo has done more to earn recognition, credibility and a dedicated fan base. You need proof? Canelo's next fight is in a 40,000 seat ballpark and he's expected to fill it. Junior's next fight is an 8,000-seat venue and he isn't expected to fill it. And let me ask you this: Which of the two do you expect to fight Golovkin first?

Your mythical matchups: Pacquiao vs Mosley – Sugar Shane by late TKO (in a sensational fight); De La Hoya vs. Canelo – De La Hoya (the 2001-2003 junior middleweight version, not the 2006-2007 version) by hard-fought decision; Chavez Sr. vs. Duran – Duran by decision (in a great fight); Mayweather vs. Whitaker – Sweet Pea by comfortable decision in an intense but generally uneventful boxing match.

MICHAEL, FROM MANCHESTER, had four short questions for Fischer: 1) Who are his Top 5 favorite active fighters "at the minute?" 2) Which prospects does he view as potential future superstars? 3) How does he see Andre Ward (after a couple of tune-up bouts) doing against Sergey Kovalev and Adonis Stevenson at light heavyweight? 4) Who does he favor in the two upcoming super middleweight title bouts between the Dirrell brothers (Anthony and Andre) against British contenders George Groves and James DeGale.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: 1. Golovkin, Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez, Kovalev, Carl Froch and Keith Thurman. 2. Anthony Joshua, Felix Verdejo, Joseph Diaz Jr., Errol Spence Jr. and Jason Quigley. 3. I'd give Ward a good shot at beating both light heavyweight kings. I might favor Ward to beat Stevenson but it all depends on how he looks in his comeback bouts. 4. I favor both Brits by close decisions.

From the authors of



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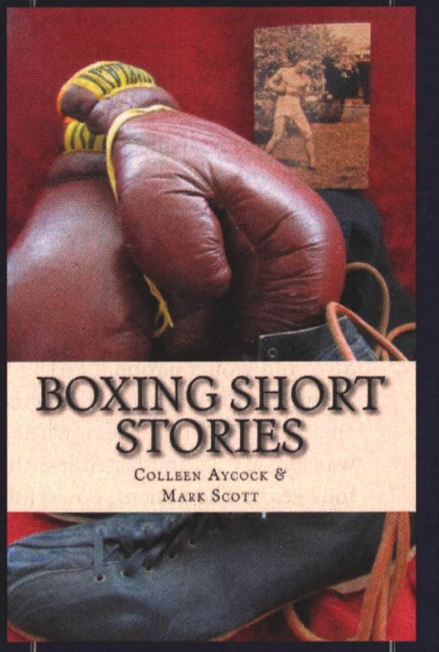

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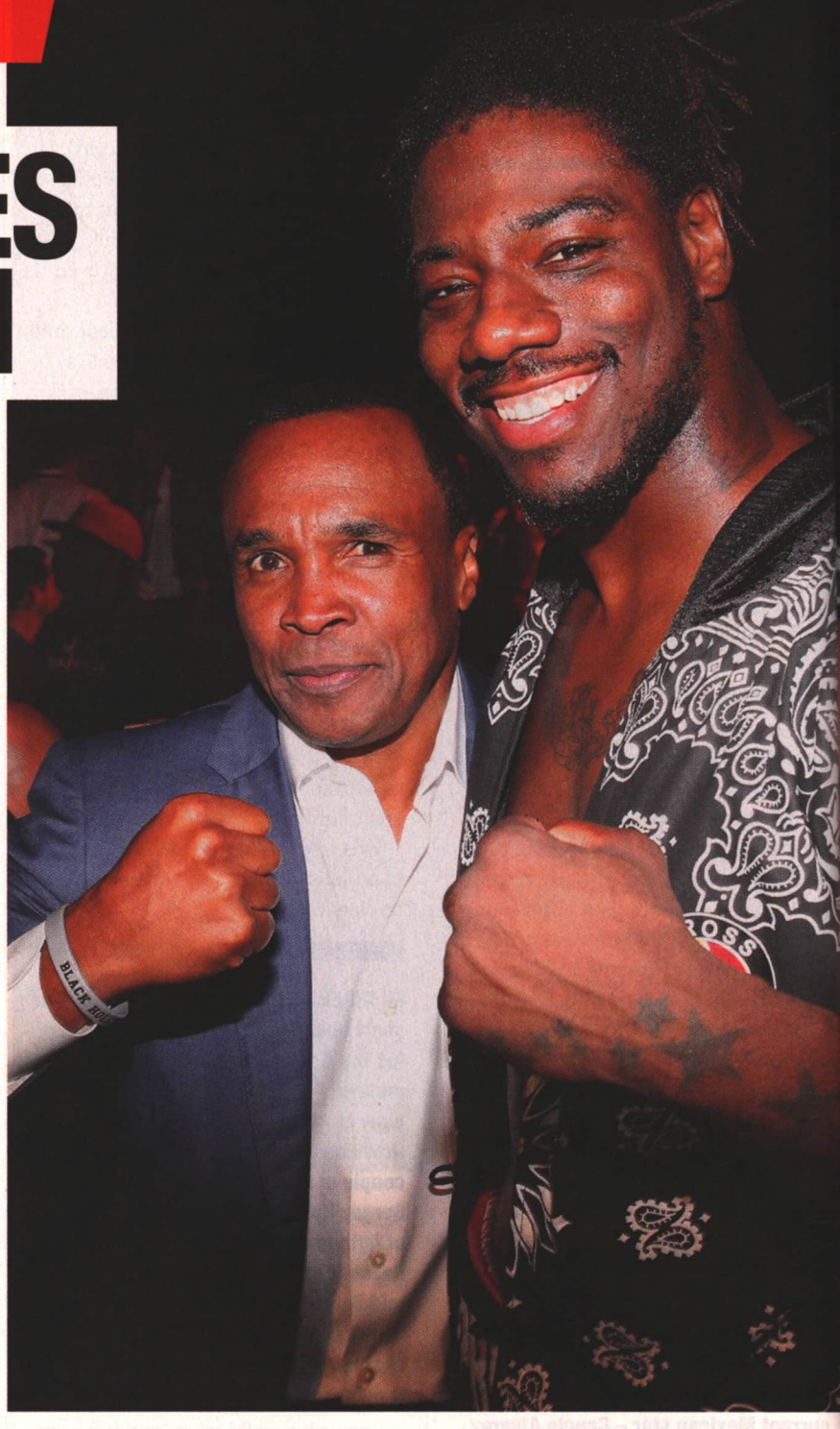
CHARLES MARTIN

THE 6-FOOT-5, 240-POUND HEAVYWEIGHT IS RISING RAPIDLY

By **Keith Idec**



Charles Martin (pictured with Sugar Ray Leonard) wants to win a heavyweight title before he's 30 and retire at 34.

Not in Charles Martin's "wildest dreams" did the emerging heavyweight envision fighting for a living.

Martin didn't even expect to turn pro after moving from Colorado Springs to Carson, California, to become part of television mogul Michael King's "All-American Heavyweight" amateur program nearly seven years ago. He thought he'd explore an unconventional opportunity and then return to Colorado to resume his education to become a pharmacist.

The more Martin fought, though, the more his head trainer, Jamal Abdullah, convinced him he's a natural and could evolve into an elite heavyweight at the professional level.

The 6-foot-5, 240-pounder went 56-7 and won a national PAL championship during a whirlwind amateur career that began when he was already 22 and lasted less than four years. The patient, powerful southpaw kept fighting at the same unusually hectic pace once he made his pro debut 2½ years ago.

He is already 20-0-1 and has 18 knockouts, enough to earn Top 10 spots in both the IBF and WBO heavyweight rankings.

"I feel I've progressed tremendously," Martin said. "With my consistency and me not taking any time off, I feel that has been a big contributor to my success so far. I've been blessed to stay so active and be able to get in that ring so often."

The deep-pocketed King, now Martin's promoter, has made sure to keep him very busy. Martin's success thus far has convinced King and the rest of his handlers he is ready to fight legitimate contenders and earn a title shot soon.

"Charles' learning curve has been so impressive," said manager Mike Borao, "that 12 months from now I can't see any other heavyweight competing with him, including Wladimir Klitschko."

Martin has fought on ESPN2's

THE ESSENTIALS
CHARLES MARTIN

Age: 28

Weight class: Heavyweight

Height: 6 feet, 5 inches

Stance: Southpaw

Hometown: Carson, California

Record: 20-0-1 (18 KOs)

Biggest strengths: Activity. Has boxed 21 times as a pro and 63 times as an amateur since fighting for the first time nearly seven years ago. ★ **Power.** While he has been matched methodically, Martin has knocked out 86 percent of his pro opponents. ★ **Defense.** His athleticism and instincts have prevented him from taking too many unnecessary punches.

Biggest question marks: Level of opposition. Has beaten several seasoned veterans and three prospects who were at least 10-0, yet hasn't fought a Top 15 heavyweight. ★ **Chin.** It has been reliable but hasn't been tested by a puncher accomplished at the championship level.

"Friday Night Fights" and Showtime's "ShoBox: The New Generation" but he hasn't received a ton of exposure while knocking out mostly overmatched opponents.

That'll change April 25, when Martin is scheduled to compete on the Klitschko-Bryant Jennings undercard at Madison Square Garden. Martin's opponent hadn't been secured by press time for this issue but HBO executives have committed to televising highlights of Martin's fight.

"There's nothing bigger in boxing, being on a card that's on HBO and at Madison Square Garden," said Martin, who turned 29 on April 24. "It's just special, a lot of exposure for me. I'm excited about it. I can't wait. I'm looking forward to knocking this guy out and getting the highlight reel on HBO. That's the door-opener for big things in my career."

Like most heavyweights, Martin wants nothing more than an opportunity to end Klitschko's lengthy reign of dominance.

"I dream of fighting Wladimir every day," Martin said. "There isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about Klitschko and me fighting. I don't like to brag too much or anything but it'd be a good night."

Martin's primary motivation for becoming heavyweight champion is to provide for his three sons and daughter. If he does conquer Klitschko, Martin doesn't plan to box professionally anywhere near as long as the 39-year-old legend from Ukraine.

Martin's plan is to win a world title before he turns 30 and retire at 34, before boxing can take too much of a toll on his mind and body.

"That's another reason I'm hurrying to get to the top," Martin said. "Our bodies aren't made to get hit. I don't want to stay too long. You're only one punch away from getting hurt. It's a dangerous sport. I'm blessed to have the abilities I have. I want to use them, make some money and leave the sport alone. It's an unforgiving sport." RING

Keith Idec covers boxing for The Record, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @Idecboxing.

3 MORE TO WATCH

CLARENCE BOOTH
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT

Booth's boxing career began at 19 and he turned pro after only 30 amateur bouts. But after losing a decision to Cletus Seldin (16-0, 13 KOs) in his third professional fight, Booth (10-1, 6 KOs) has displayed promise by winning eight straight. Top Rank recently signed the 27-year-old St. Petersburg, Florida, native to a promotional contract.

IEVGEN KHYTROV
MIDDLEWEIGHT

Following a historic amateur career in which he went a reported 450-50, this 2012 Ukrainian Olympian has knocked out each of his first nine pro opponents. An eighth-round technical knockout of heavy-handed Puerto Rican veteran Jorge Melendez (28-5-1, 26 KOs) in a March 6 fight in Las Vegas proved Khytrov is much more advanced than most prospects with nine fights. Expect to see plenty more of the 26-year-old, whose fan-friendly style already is drawing comparisons to Gennady Golovkin.

ADAM LOPEZ
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT

This prospect from San Antonio recorded the most impressive victory of his three-year pro career when he knocked out Houston's Pablo Cruz (11-1, 3 KOs) in the second round on March 13 in Westbury, New York. Lopez (10-0, 5 KOs) hadn't defeated a pro with a winning record before flooring the previously unbeaten Cruz twice with left hooks in the second round of a fight Showtime televised as part of its "ShoBox: The New Generation" series. A six-time national champion as an amateur, Lopez, 24, is trained by former IBF junior lightweight champ Carlos "Famoso" Hernandez.

WHO'S THE BOSS?

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE **TERRI MOSS** RETAINS THE SAME CAN-DO ATTITUDE THAT EARNED HER A WORLD TITLE

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Terri Moss is an unlikely Hall of Famer. Not undeserving, just unlikely. Who else could start out a boxing career at the age of 36, lose her first three pro fights and then be inducted into the International Women's Boxing Hall of Fame, as she will this July in Fort Lauderdale, Florida?

Probably no one but "The Boss," who was both thrilled and humbled when she received the call from IWBHF founder Sue Fox last December.

"I was really surprised," she said. "I was there last year and I'm seeing Christy Martin and Lucia Rijker and Barbara Buttrick and I was in shock that I'm going to be in there too. And with (2015 inductees) Laila Ali and Ann Wolfe as well, it's pretty shocking. On the large scale, even though I put in as much work as anybody, my boxing career doesn't reflect that kind of notoriety."

Moss' 9-9 is hardly spectacular but, more so than in male boxing, the numbers rarely reflect what a

Hall of Famer Terri Moss' 9-9 record doesn't reflect her impact on boxing.

female boxer brought to the sport. And what Moss brought was a tenacity that earned her a world title and set up a career outside the ropes that includes promoting (The Corporate Fight Night amateur series), filmmaking (the documentary "Boxing Chicks") and a reputation as one of the top coaches in her state, Georgia.

"My whole purpose right now in boxing is to make a difference so that women can be seen in a new way," said Moss, who was preparing at press time to stage the Women's International Clash of Champions amateur event in Atlanta on April 20-25. "I want people to see women as good trainers now and not just good fighters. We have a lot of work left to do but I've never been afraid of the work. I want to be the female Freddie Roach, the one that all the champions come to. (Laughs.)

"My whole purpose at this point is to kick the dirt out of the roadway so we can make a new path and so women can have a place in boxing that is not a novelty."

Moss was never a novelty act but she did have a novel story. A former police officer who served on a Narcotics Task Force, Moss tagged along to the gym with a friend and boxing hooked her. The only problem was that she was in her mid-30s.

"I stumbled into a boxing gym," she recalled. "I was always into fitness and things like that. And when Olivia Newton-John was getting physical, so was I. (Laughs.) It was so late for me but I knew I was gonna give it everything I had."

Avoiding the amateur ranks, Moss turned pro in February 2002 and proceeded to strike out in her first three bouts.

"Nobody wanted to train me, nobody wanted to put anything into me, and that was OK," she said. "I guess I just wasn't afraid of that challenge."

Her fourth fight was expected to be another loss, as she faced world-ranked contender (and Atlanta Falcons cheerleader) Nina Ahlin in September 2002.

"She was everything I wanted to be, which was beautiful and young, and she had a huge following and was a nice little boxer. I was pretty jealous of that," Moss said.

Moss was asked to give her thoughts on the fight during an interview beforehand and responded without hesitation: "I'm gonna beat her."

"Don't you think you're setting your goals a little high?" the interviewer asked.

That type of disrespect didn't register with Moss, who won the bout via split decision. Over the next five years, Moss gave as good as she got against top-level competition – such as Vaia Zaganas, Hollie Dunaway and Mary Ortega – before ending her career with a 2007 win over Stephanie Dobbs that earned her the WIBF world minimumweight title.

Champion. Moss liked the sound of that.

"I said I'm not leaving until I'm a champion," she said. "It's always been shocking to me that so many people had so much more than I did and fiddled [it] away. Now I can look back and say, 'Wow, maybe this was meant to be for me.'"

As for the current state of the sport, Moss doesn't share the doom-and-gloom perspective of a lot of people. Instead, she has the same attitude she carried throughout her career in the ring.

"Don't gripe about it, just do something about it," she said. "I understand all of the complaints; I'm just not a complainer. If you look at every great movement in the history of the world, you gotta get out there and get the people behind you. That's what we really need to do." RING

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 34-9-1 (18 KOs)
Featherweight

3. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 32-1 (15 KOs)
Lightweight

4. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-3 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

5. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 32-4-3 (14 KOs)
Junior featherweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 21-4-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 13-2-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 21-5 (8 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

10. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 21-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

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BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

Robert Guerrero (left) demonstrated admirable courage but the night of March 7 belonged to Keith Thurman.

KEITH THURMAN UD 12 ROBERT GUERRERO

Date: March 7
Site: MGM Grand, Las Vegas
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Thurman 147 pounds, Guerrero 147
RING ratings (before fight): Thurman No. 7, Guerrero No. 8
Network: NBC

If Al Haymon's business model hinges on whether he can introduce a lost generation of boxers to an audience only acquainted with Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr., he got off to a good start with his PBC debut on NBC.

Hello, Keith Thurman.

Hello, Robert Guerrero.

They are ranked welterweights yet known only to die-hard fans who would put off paying the light bill for a pay-per-view card.

But the so-called crossover crowd still asks, "Who are those guys?" For the most part, they've been consigned to the supporting cast that populates the PPV undercard. The crossover crowd doesn't watch. It waits for the main event. That's what it pays for.

Occasionally, a member of the supporting cast gets a role alongside Pacquiao or Mayweather. But does anybody really remember Guerrero for his fight against Mayweather? It was a forgettable decision, just another notch in Mayweather's 47-0 record.

On an NBC stage in prime time and in a PBC ring not choked with attention-seeking entourages, however, the focus was on Thurman and Guerrero. The setting and the stage highlighted what they could do. It also highlighted what boxing can be, even in a 12-round bout that ends in a one-sided decision.

On the cards, Thurman's 120-107, 118-109, 118-108 victory said Guerrero never had a chance. But he did. In boxing, there's always a chance and sometimes it appears like spontaneous combustion. It's a reason to watch and the NBC cameras were there for the moment when Guerrero reminded everyone of how dramatically things can change.

Thurman (25-0, 21 KOs), fighting with a golf ball-sized welt on his forehead, landed successive rights with all of his concussive power in the ninth. Guerrero (32-3-1, 18 KOs) was down and seemingly done. Blood poured from a cut above his left eye, streamed across his face and spilled onto the canvas. For the first time, it looked as if he was finished, stopped.

Suddenly, however, Guerrero found something in himself that nobody else saw. He got up. He transformed ordinary into prime time. He brought the fight to Thurman with straight rights in a futile last stand.

Despite the blood and a bumpy ridge of bruises along his forehead, there was no anguish or anger. He won admiration on a night when the unbeaten Thurman might have won a shot at Marcos Maidana.

"I won the hearts of America," said Guerrero, who left Thurman with a nasty welt on the left side of his head with a butt midway through the third.

Hearts might translate to eyeballs for Haymon, who bought the time on NBC and hopes that strong ratings will eventually attract advertisers and a return on his investment. But Haymon needs stars. The PPV model hasn't created enough stars to sustain the business beyond Pacquiao and Mayweather.

According to Nielsen, an average audience of 3.4 million watched the PBC debut. That's about a million more than the pay-per-view record. More important, the NBC telecast led the prime-time slot in the coveted 18-to-49 age demographic.

It's just a beginning, but combine the numbers with the performance and there's reason to think there will be more.

NO. 1 CARL FRAMPTON TKO 5 NO. 5 CHRIS AVALOS

Feb. 28, Belfast, Northern Ireland (ITV)

There were no surprises on Barry McGuigan's birthday. There was just a heck of a party, thrown by Carl Frampton.

Frampton ensured that McGuigan, his manager and mentor, would have a happy 54th with a fifth-round stoppage of American Chris Avalos, who was more victim than guest in Belfast.

"I think it was my best performance," Frampton (20-0, 14 KOs) said of what serves as a warning to England's Scott Quigg, Mexican-American Leo Santa Cruz and Cuban Guillermo Rigondeaux.

For one night, Frampton was everything his nickname and Belfast neighborhood suggest. "The Jackal" from Tiger Bay was cunning and quick to strike in a junior featherweight fight stopped at 1:33 of the fifth with Avalos (25-3, 19 KOs) exhausted and defenseless.

"It's time for the Quigg fight," said McGuigan, an Irish legend who said he would proceed with negotiations for a U.K. showdown.

NO. 3 TYSON FURY TKO 8 CHRISTIAN HAMMER

Feb. 28, London (BoxNation)

Tyson Fury talks a lot. Sings some, too.

Fury (24-0, 18 KOs) sang "Walking in Memphis" after walking down Christian Hammer (17-4, 10 KOs), who was down in the fifth and quit after the eighth.

There was no worry that Fury might be singing the blues. Hammer was there, ready to be beaten in what might be a stepping stone to Wladimir Klitschko.

"I'm ready for him," said Fury, who was named after Mike Tyson. The name was chosen by his dad, John, who was released from prison in February after serving five years for gouging out a man's eye.

Fury has the name, the rep and the record. He also might get Klitschko, who is scheduled to fight Bryant Jennings on April 25.

But there's an old line: Be careful about what you want. Like the song said: "Do I really feel the way I feel?"

CHAMPION ROMAN GONZALEZ TKO 3 VALENTIN LEON

Feb. 28, Managua, Nicaragua (Canal 4 Nicaragua)

Titles in three weight classes and 36 knockouts over a 42-0 record are hard to overlook. Yet Roman Gonzalez has been. Call him unbeaten and relatively unknown.

But the zero in the flyweight's public profile is about to go away with a date expected to generate attention for a Nicaraguan who has been making a living in Japan.

Gonzalez will follow Gennady Golovkin's path from anonymity to prominence when he faces Edgar Sosa (51-8, 30 KOs) on May 16 at The Forum in Inglewood, California, on an HBO-televised card featuring the Kazakhstani star against Willie Monroe Jr.

Gonzalez, who will fight in the U.S. for only the fourth time, is coming off a third-round stoppage of Valentin Leon (38-29-3, 21 KOs). It looked as if was trying out a new weight (115). But then HBO called with the biggest opportunity for a little guy since giants Michael Carbajal, Humberto Gonzalez and Ricardo Lopez.

NO. 5 AMNAT RUENROENG UD 12 ZOU SHIMING

March 7, Macau, China (HBO2/BoxNation)

Bob Arum's China plan sustained an early defeat.

With apologies to Manny Pacquiao, Zou Shiming is to Chinese boxing what Bruce Lee was to martial arts. He's a two-time Olympic gold medalist. Arum's chances at turning China into a pro market started with Zou.

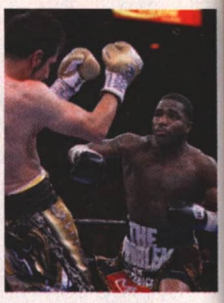
But where does it go now?

Amnat Ruenroeng (15-0, 5 KOs) scored a one-sided decision over Zou (6-1, 1 KO). It was 116-111 on all three cards. But Arum remained upbeat.

"Shiming knows, like all of us, that all great fighters suffer a loss," Arum said.

That might be news to Floyd Mayweather Jr. Still, Zou sounded as if he was ready to go back to work. So was trainer Freddie Roach, who was surprised at Ruenroeng's elusiveness.

"My game plan sucked," said Roach, who sounded as if he'd have a better one in a rematch.



NO. 5 ADRIEN BRONER UD 12 JOHN MOLINA

March 7, Las Vegas (NBC)

Adrien Broner calls himself The Problem. But he's got more than one.

Unfulfilled expectations and a fight in court are just a couple of problems that continue to create doubt about Broner.

There were boos from an MGM Grand crowd unhappy with a dull decision over John Molina (27-6, 22 KOs). The junior welterweight bout had the potential to spoil Al Haymon's NBC debut. It didn't, thanks to the Keith Thurman-Robert Guerrero thriller.

But the booing was a message: Fans are weary of Broner (30-1, 22 KOs).

A week after the 120-108, 118-110, 120-108 decision was announced, news broke in Cincinnati that Broner faces driving-while-impaired charges. He refused a breath test after he was pulled over on Jan. 11. He pleaded innocent and asked for a jury trial. Oh yeah, he also asked for a fight with Amir Khan.

NO. 3 ABNER MARES
UD 10 **ARTURO SANTOS REYES**
March 7, Las Vegas (NBCSN)

Abner Mares continues his quest to re-discover the featherweight he was before Jhonny Gonzalez knocked something out of him.

Victories have been there. He has won three straight since Gonzalez interrupted his career with a first-round stoppage in 2013. But that old Mares identity is still elusive.

Mares (29-1-1,15 KOs) was competent in a 10-round decision over Arturo Santos Reyes (18-5, 5 KOs). It was unanimous on the cards. But there was doubt on whether he was back. Even he expressed it.

"I'm hard on myself because I know I can do better," he said after scoring a second-round knockdown in a 99-90, 98-91, 96-93 victory. "I had no energy. I felt sick. I didn't feel like I could throw. I felt tired."

He didn't feel like himself. Until he does, a showdown with Leo Santa Cruz or a Gonzalez rematch might have to wait.

ANDRE BERTO
TKO 6
JOSESITO LOPEZ
March 13, Ontario, Calif., (Spike)

They are welterweights who always seem to be at a crossroads. They still are but Andre Berto is headed to renewed possibilities while Josesito Lopez is looking at one he has seen too often.

Berto (30-3, 23 KOs) began to resurrect himself with a sixth-round stoppage of Lopez (33-7, 19 KOs), who is still "The Riverside Rocky" and still trapped in a career with a limited horizon.

Berto, 3-3 since 2010 and perhaps headed for a Victor Ortiz rematch, won his second straight at a moment when fans and two judges thought Lopez was winning. Lopez's bodywork was scoring but it all changed with a right hand. It dropped him. Seconds later, he was down again. Referee Raul Caiz Jr. waved it off at 1:03 of the sixth.

"This would have been different if it had continued," said a frustrated Lopez, now confronted with a decision on how to continue.

NO. 1 SERGEY KOVALEV
TKO 8 **NO. 3 JEAN PASCAL**
March 14, Montreal (HBO)

Head games are a time-honored tactic but a mistake against Sergey Kovalev. Jean Pascal tried, really tried, to get into Kovalev's head. He knocked a cap off Kovalev's head at the weigh-in.

Next day, Kovalev (27-0-1, 24 KOs) got Pascal's scalp, scoring a crushing eighth-round stoppage in a patient, powerful performance that impressed everyone but Adonis Stevenson.

Pascal's gamesmanship looked foolish, especially against a light heavyweight who faced and beat Bernard Hopkins, the head-master. Nobody is better at using psychology than Hopkins. Nobody ever beat him as badly as Kovalev did.

Pascal's chances rested in fast hands, which kept him in the fight after a third-round knockdown. But Kovalev's right hand was there early and there in the end. In the eighth, two rights left Pascal (29-3-1, 17 KOs) hanging on the ropes, looking spent and finished at 1:03 of the round.

NO. 1 GENNADY GOLOVKIN
TKO 11
NO. 7 MARTIN MURRAY
Feb. 21, Monaco (HBO)

Gennady Golovkin needed the rounds. So did his fans. The more they see him, the more they want to. Against Martin Murray, the GGG crowd – it's Gone Global – almost got 11 full rounds from the middleweight, who usually finishes his work within eight.

"It was like a practice fight," said Golovkin (32-0, 29 KOs) after he ran his stoppage streak to 19 with a TKO of Murray at 2:10 of the 11th. "... I needed this for practice."

But practice for whom? Miguel Cotto remains at the top of Golovkin's wish list. But there's been nothing from Cotto that says he wants to risk his title or his career against Golovkin, who floored Murray (29-2-1, 12 KOs) three times.

Instead, Golovkin will continue to move forward, this time on May 16 against slick Willie Monroe Jr. at The Forum in Inglewood, Calif.

NO. 2 ARTHUR ABRAHAM
UD 12 **PAUL SMITH**
Feb. 21, Berlin (SkySports3/SAT1)

Arthur Abraham might not have needed a rematch to remind anyone that he's still around and still a player at super middleweight.

But a rematch did the trick anyway, delivering a message that the 35-year-old Abraham (42-4, 28 KOs) isn't going anywhere. He soundly beat Paul Smith, scoring a 117-111, 116-112, 117-111 victory in a sequel of his controversial scorecard decision in September.

"This time, he beat me," said Smith (35-5, 20 KOs) after he was worn down by Abraham's endurance and strength.

The victory put Abraham in line for Robert Stieglitz or Felix Sturm. They might be in a rematch of their own. They fought to a draw in November. Beat either and Abraham might get to fulfill his biggest goal.

"Obviously, avenging my losses to Andre Ward and Carl Froch," he told RingTV.com.

COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

The Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao superfight is May 2 in Las Vegas.

APRIL

APRIL 18 – Terence Crawford vs. Thomas Dulorme, junior welterweights (for the vacant WBO title), Arlington, Texas (HBO)

APRIL 18 – Lucas Matthysse vs. Ruslan Provodnikov, junior welterweights, Verona, N.Y. (HBO)

APRIL 18 – Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Andrzej Fonfara, light heavyweights, Carson, Calif. (Showtime)

APRIL 18 – Richar Abril vs. Derry Mathews, lightweights (for Abril's WBA title), Liverpool, England

APRIL 22 – Juan Carlos Reveco vs. Kazuto Ioka, flyweights, Osaka, Japan

APRIL 22 – Katsunari Takayama vs. Fahlan Sakkreerin, strawweights, Osaka, Japan

APRIL 24 – Anthony Dirrell vs. Badou Jack, super middleweights (for Dirrell's WBC title), Chicago (Spike)

APRIL 24 – Daniel Jacobs vs. Caleb Truax, middleweights, Chicago (Spike)

APRIL 25 – Wladimir Klitschko vs. Bryant Jennings, heavyweights (for Klitschko's RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titles), New York City (HBO)

APRIL 25 – Sadam Ali vs. Francisco Santana, welterweights, New York City (HBO)

APRIL 25 – Felix Verdejo vs. Marco Antonio Lopez, lightweights, Guaynabo, P.R. (UniMas)

APRIL 30 – Mercito Gesta vs. Carlos Molina, junior welterweights, Indio, Calif. (Fox Sports 1)

MAY

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. VS. MANNY PACQUIAO

Date: May 2

Location: MGM Grand, Las Vegas

Division: Welterweight (for Mayweather's RING, WBA and WBC and Pacquiao's WBO titles)

TV: Pay-per-view

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Vasyl Lomachenko vs. Gamalier Rodriguez, featherweights (for Lomachenko's WBO title); Jesse Hart vs. Mike Jimenez, super middleweights

Significance: Mayweather (47-0, 26 KOs), coming off back-to-back victories over a determined Marcos Maidana, remains formidable but is 38. Pacquiao (57-5-2, 38 KOs) has rebounded from his 2012 KO loss to Juan Manuel Marquez with three straight victories. He's 36.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Mayweather UD; Fischer – Mayweather SD; Harty – Mayweather UD

CANELO ALVAREZ VS. JAMES KIRKLAND

Date: May 9

Location: Minute Maid Park, Houston

Division: Junior middleweight

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Frankie Gomez vs. Humberto Soto, junior welterweights

Significance: Alvarez (44-1-1, 31 KOs) isn't facing pushovers. He has fought in succession Austin Trout, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Alfredo Angulo and Erislandy Lara. And now comes Kirkland (32-1, 28 KOs). The Texan is unpredictable outside the ring but brings fire in it. Should be fun.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Alvarez KO 5; Fischer – Alvarez KO 10; Harty – Alvarez KO 5

GENNADY GOLOVKIN VS. WILLIE MONROE JR.

Date: May 16

Location: The Forum, Inglewood, Calif.

Division: Middleweight (for Golovkin's WBA title)

TV: HBO

Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★

Also fighting: Roman Gonzalez vs. Edgar Sosa, flyweights (for Gonzalez's WBC title)

Significance: Golovkin (32-0, 29 KOs) has stopped 19 consecutive opponents. Monroe (19-1, 6 KOs) probably will be No. 20. The southpaw is a very good boxer and athletic – as he proved in an easy win over Brian Vera – but doesn't have the power to keep Golovkin off of him.

Prediction: Rosenthal – Golovkin KO 6; Fischer – Golovkin KO 9; Harty – Golovkin KO 3

MAY 1 – Takahiro Ao vs. Raymundo Beltran, lightweights (for vacant WBO title), Las Vegas (truTV)

MAY 1 – Takashi Miura vs. Billy Dib, junior lightweights (for Miura's WBC title), Tokyo

MAY 6 – Takashi Uchiyama vs. Jomthong Chuwatana, junior lightweights (for Uchiyama's WBA title), Tokyo

MAY 6 – Ryoichi Taguchi vs. Kwanthai Sithmorseng, junior flyweights (for Taguchi's WBA title), Tokyo

MAY 8 – Amir Mansour vs. Joey Dawejko, heavyweights, Philadelphia (ESPN2)

MAY 9 – Omar Figueroa vs. Ricky Burns, junior welterweights, San Antonio (CBS)

MAY 9 – Frankie Gavin vs. Chris van Heerden, welterweights, Birmingham, England

MAY 9 – Fedor Chudinov vs. Felix Sturm, super middleweights, Frankfurt, Germany

MAY 9 – Javier Mendoza vs. Milan Mellindo, junior flyweights (for Mendoza's IBF title), Tijuana, Mexico (beIN Sports Espanol)

MAY 16 – Javier Fortuna vs. Bryan Vasquez, junior lightweights, Panama City, Panama

MAY 22 – Grigory Drozd vs. Krzysztof Wlodarczyk, crusierweights (for Drozd's WBC title), Moscow

MAY 30 – Jorge Linares vs. Kevin Mitchell, lightweights (for Linares' WBC title), London (Sky Sports)

MAY 30 – Evgeny Gradovich vs. Lee Selby, featherweights (for Gradovich's IBF title), London (Sky Sports)

MAY 30 – Anthony Joshua vs. Kevin Johnson, heavyweights, London (Sky Sports)

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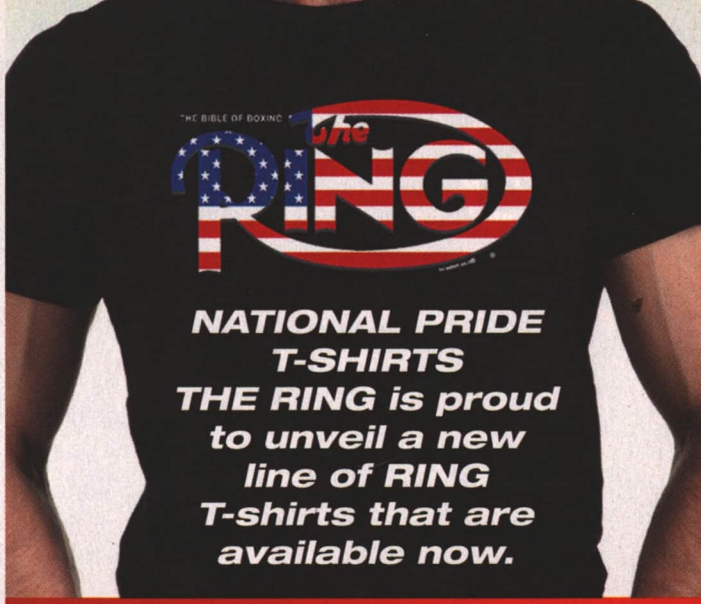

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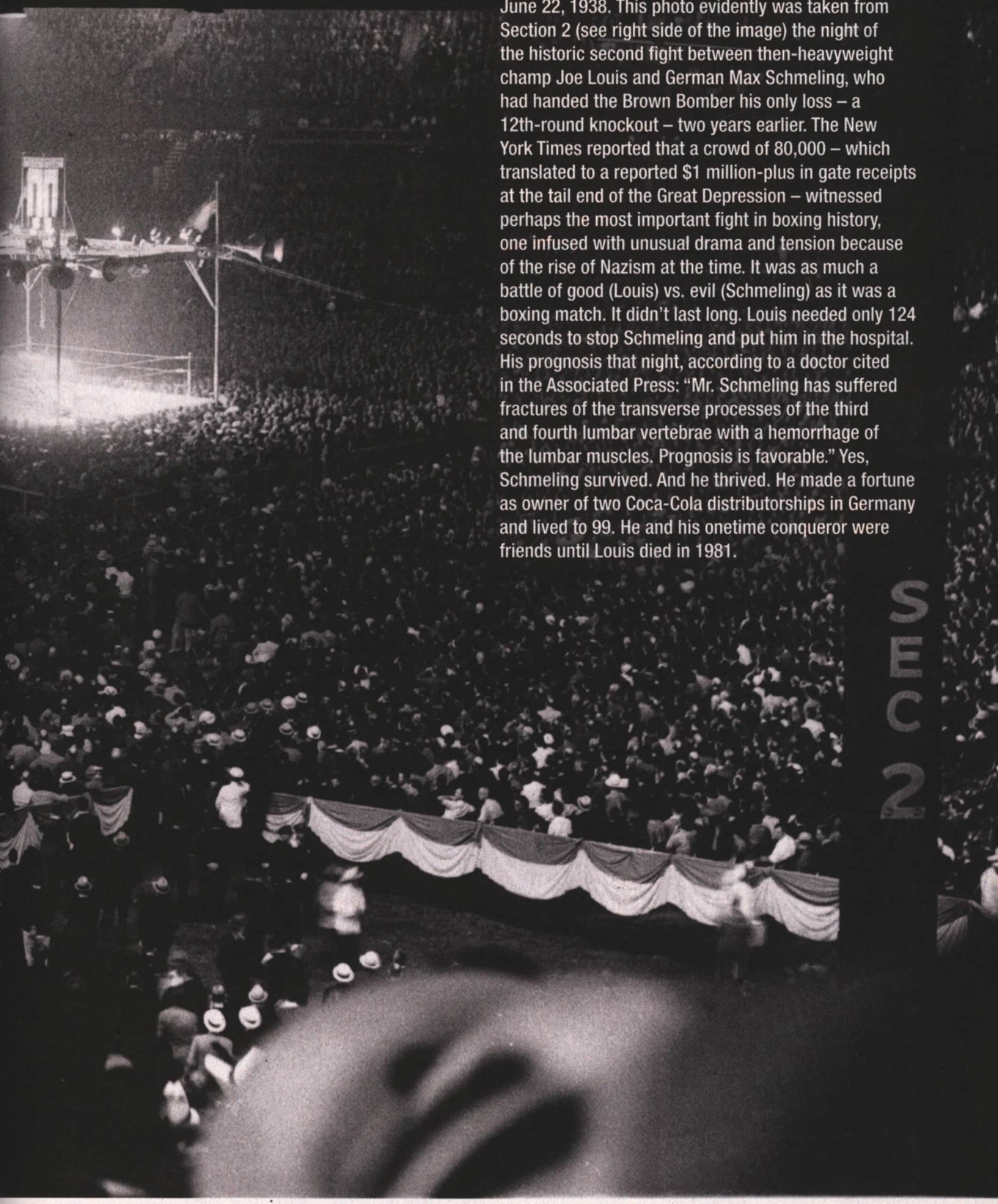

The original Yankee Stadium was the site of many important sporting events, a number featuring Babe Ruth. None was bigger than the one pictured here on June 22, 1938. This photo evidently was taken from Section 2 (see right side of the image) the night of the historic second fight between then-heavyweight champ Joe Louis and German Max Schmeling, who had handed the Brown Bomber his only loss – a 12th-round knockout – two years earlier. The New York Times reported that a crowd of 80,000 – which translated to a reported $1 million-plus in gate receipts at the tail end of the Great Depression – witnessed perhaps the most important fight in boxing history, one infused with unusual drama and tension because of the rise of Nazism at the time. It was as much a battle of good (Louis) vs. evil (Schmeling) as it was a boxing match. It didn't last long. Louis needed only 124 seconds to stop Schmeling and put him in the hospital. His prognosis that night, according to a doctor cited in the Associated Press: "Mr. Schmeling has suffered fractures of the transverse processes of the third and fourth lumbar vertebrae with a hemorrhage of the lumbar muscles. Prognosis is favorable." Yes, Schmeling survived. And he thrived. He made a fortune as owner of two Coca-Cola distributorships in Germany and lived to 99. He and his onetime conqueror were friends until Louis died in 1981.

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